

THE TWINS AT CAMP



DOROTHY WHITEHILL

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One of them stepped gingerly into the plane and the other
smiled to herself to watch her.

The Twins at Camp.

Frontispiece

THE TWINS AT CAMP

BY
DOROTHY WHITEHILL

Author of
"JANET, A TWIN," "POLLY'S FIRST YEAR AT
BOARDING SCHOOL," "JOY AND GYPSY JOE," ETC.

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JOHN M. FOSTER

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I FOREWORD	7
II THE VILLAGE SCHOOL	10
III IN NEW YORK	22
IV AT HILLTOP	35
V THE GAME	45
VI OLD FRIENDS	58
VII AN INCIDENT ON THE TRAIN	72
VIII IN OLD CHESTER	85
IX CAMP HAPPY-GO-LUCKY	96
X JUDY	107
XI AN ACCIDENT	118
XII DEAR TWINS	130
XIII THEY COME!	143
XIV ARCHIE AND DEBBY	151
XV FLOWERS	162
XVI COUPLES	173
XVII FOURTH OF JULY	183
XVIII THE MIKADO	197
XIX THE PLAY—CONCLUSION	208

ILLUSTRATIONS

One of them stepped gingerly into the
plane and the other smiled to herself
to watch her (Page 115) *Frontispiece*

PAGE

A curious sight met their eyes . . . 69

“Jan, will all these girls disapprove of
me like your twin and Mrs. West-
lake?” 121

“English dear, do you know that once
upon a time my ancestors gave
yours a terrible beating on this very
day?” 185

THE TWINS AT CAMP

CHAPTER I

FOREWORD

IN the little New England town of Old Chester Janet Page grew up not knowing that she had a twin sister in New York and an adorable Auntie Mogs. It was a letter to Tom, Janet's brother, that brought about the discovery. Tom came to Old Chester from his ranch in Arizona and sent for Janet's twin, Phyllis.

The next book shows the Twins in New York, where they have many good times and meet their lifelong friends, Daphne and Sally, and many others, including Chuck and Don and Grant Weeks.

From New York they go to Hilltop, the

most wonderful school in the world, and there they meet Ann and Prue and Gladys and Poppy and Gwen and the Red Twins.

They spend the summer in Arizona with Tom and meet his outfit, among them English, who is Tom's right-hand man. Daisy rides across the sands to them and into Tom's heart and they have a wedding at the ranch.

The Twins spend the summer in Old Chester and Janet becomes better acquainted with Peter, a very dear friend of hers who had been adopted by "Nan," and lives in the big house on the hill that holds the Enchanted Kingdom. That summer they meet Helen and Hester, who live with their father on an old farm. Jake, Helen's best friend, and her father are drowned and Helen comes under the mighty protection of Nan Todd.

Tommy Junior claims them next and they spend a glorious summer again in Arizona. There Janet becomes engaged to Peter and Phyllis to English.

In the next book Sonya dances her way into

their hearts and they spend a happy summer in Old Chester when Sonya's brother comes home and falls in love with Helen, who is now the village school-mistress. Jimmy Crosby and two of his friends come to board with Helen. In this book the Westlakes come to town and help to wake up sleepy Old Chester, especially after their stepmother arrives. She turns out to be an old Hilltopper.

The Twins are married in the next book and all their friends come to the wedding and there are great doings in Old Chester.

They spend part of their honeymoon at Tom's ranch and Daisy gives a big house-party. Daphne, among other friends, arrives and is followed by the devoted Chuck, who proposes for the fiftieth time and is finally accepted.

Natalie Ladd, Sally's cousin, joins them and Janet and Tommy Jr. are kidnapped by the Mexicans.

This brings the story up to "THE TWINS AT CAMP."

CHAPTER II

THE VILLAGE SCHOOL

SPRING sunshine flooded the main street of Old Chester and sent dapple patterns on the faces of the old buildings that straggled along its length.

The schoolhouse droned like a huge bee, for it was ten o'clock and arithmetic class was in progress. Helen Jenks hated arithmetic, but she bravely went through the tables and pretended she liked it.

Deedee Westlake stood in the corner, which was the usual place for her to stand, since Deedee could think of more naughty things to do in a minute than the whole school could in an hour. Today she had come in before school was open and glued the desks of several of the best scholars down tight. When Helen arrived there was a great to-do. Deedee as-

sumed her share of the blame without hesitation, and when Helen, almost tearful, asked her why she had done it she confessed:

"It's like this, Helen—I mean Miss Jenks—Mary and Walter are so goody-goody and they were so proud of themselves in reading, and 'specially writing, and they thought that Dr. Blake was coming in to see the copy-books this morning and so I—oh, well, I can't explain, but don't you *see*—their copy books would be glued up and that would be a lark."

"No, Deedee, I don't see," said Helen, wearily. "Go stand in the corner for the rest of the period and then I must think of some way of really punishing you."

"Can I go, too?" Little Thing, the youngest of the Westlakes, looked appealingly at Helen, and her lip trembled.

Helen sighed. It was always the way, if she punished Deedee it was Little Thing that suffered.

"No, dear," she said, regretfully, "but you may say the three times three table for me."

Little Thing sniffed and began.

It was upon this scene that the Twins arrived.

Janet and Phyllis were as pretty and as lively as ever. Their brown eyes sparkled and their hair, cut in the very latest bob, framed faces that were, in spite of their twenty years, exactly alike. They almost danced when they walked, and they brought with them some of the sunshine from the outdoors and certainly much of the spirit.

"Helen," began Janet, "it's a heavenly day. Do let the youngsters have a holiday, and come on up to the house for luncheon."

"They can't study with the sun shining like this. Let them go out and play." Phyllis added her plea to her twin's.

Helen looked at them in mock despair.

"Girls," she said severely, "don't be ridiculous. There's lots of work to be done today, and for the next few weeks, if I am to get the older children ready for high school, but I tell you what you can do. Take the babies and

give them a botany lesson out in the fields, then I could get some work done. Deedee is behaving dreadfully this morning."

Janet looked at the offending Deedee, and smiled.

"Poor lamb, what has she done now?" she inquired.

Helen shook her head. "I'm not going to tell you, for you'd only laugh. If you take the other children out she can't go with you. She's really been too naughty."

"Oh!" exclaimed Janet. "Then it's all off. I won't take the others without her. Come on now, Helen, she couldn't have been so very bad."

Helen, in spite of herself, smiled. She had far too much sense of humor to be a severe schoolmarm, and besides that, Deedee outside of school hours was a great pet of hers.

"Oh, take them all," she said, "and don't bring them back before three o'clock."

The younger children, who had been waiting breathless to hear the end of the discussion,

rose from their seats and made a rush for Janet and Phyllis. Deedee went over to Helen.

"I'll be good till school closes, honestly I will," she promised. "I'm sorry about the desks, but I thought you'd think it was funny, too, 'specially if Dr. Blake came."

Helen smiled, so Deedee gave her a hasty kiss, and flew off to join the others, leaving Helen with the four older pupils, who were trying to struggle into the high school in the next town.

Janet and Phyllis looked at each other and grimaced.

"Now that we have them, what are we going to do with them?" Janet asked.

"Not botany, anyway," Phyllis laughed. "Let's take them up and show them the lambs."

"And keep them for lunch on the lawn," Janet added.

They walked on, the children babbling with delight all around them. There were twelve and their ages ran from seven to ten, all except Little Thing, who was only five.

"Let's go down and get Lorry and Debby to help us," Phyllis said, and she took Mary Simmons firmly by one hand and Walter Mead by the other, thereby stopping a hair-pulling contest.

"Alice would love it, too," replied Janet.

Archie Kent fell down and cut his knee, and the whole procession stopped while Phyllis tied her handkerchief around it.

They walked down to the Westlakes' and found Lorry and Debby and Alice all busy in the garden.

The Westlake girls and their stepmother looked about the same age, for Alice was one of those people who never get old; and indeed she had never had as much responsibility in her life as Lorry had had in her few years, for Lorry had been the head of the house since the death of her adored brother in the Great War. She had followed in his path, and brought up the family to be Spartans until Alice came along and "babied" them all.

Debby looked up first and called a greeting.

"What have you got there?" she inquired.

"Oh, we've kidnapped Helen's children for the day, and we want you to come and help us amuse them," Janet told her.

Alice straightened up from the bed of tulips she had been bending over and surveyed the children. Deedee had disappeared and Little Thing still clung to Phyllis' hand.

"Cookies!" said Alice and went into the house after Deedee.

"Gee, this is fun!" exclaimed Walter. "Can't we do this every day, Miss Janet?"

Janet smiled. "I thought you liked school," she teased.

"I do," Walter admitted, "but cookies is better."

Alice came out of the side door with a big Mason jar in her arms.

Deedee followed, with an impish grin on her elfin mouth.

Eleven hungry hands shot into the jar and came back with a big cooky each.

Deedee said "No, thank you" politely when

her mother offered her one. A minute later she had Little Thing off to one side and was whispering to her.

Mary was the first one, she had taken the greediest bite out of her cooky and before she swallowed it she began to sneeze. Walter followed, and then the rest in quick succession. It seemed as though the countryside were all caught in the paroxysm. Even Dusty the dog sneezed.

"What under the sun—?" began Alice, and then she sneezed too.

"Deedee!" exclaimed Lorry. "You put pepper on those cookies, you little wretch! Come on, Deb, let's duck her in the rain barrel."

"Oh, girls, don't," protested Alice, but one thing she had never been able to teach the Westlakes was to delay punishment.

Deedee led them a merry chase, but at last they cornered her and before their mother could intervene Deedee was in the rain barrel, clothes and all.

She came up sputtering. "Pax" was her first word, and then she began to laugh as the children still continued to sneeze.

"Oh, girls, you mustn't," protested Alice. "She'll catch her death of cold. Deedee, go upstairs and change at once."

Deedee, dripping wet, turned to obey.

After the children had been soothed and given water to drink, they started up the hill that led to the Twins' home. There they found Peter Gibbs, Janet's husband, just returning with the mail.

"Letters for you from Sonya," he said, as he handed Janet an envelope marked with the Hilltop crest.

Janet tore it open slowly.

"It will be plans for Commencement. Let's hear it," begged Alice, and Janet read:

"Beloved Twins—

"I am so excited I am standing on my head. Just think, Hester and I are the ones selected from the whole school; but of course that's be-

cause we are the youngest. Just the same it was sweet of them, and the first time ever. Oh, I am so thrilled. Be sure and come!

“Your adoring
“Sonya.”

“Now, what under the sun is the child talking about?” demanded Phyllis.

Alice’s face had fallen a little as she listened. “Oh, dear,” she said, ruefully, “I had sort of hoped that Dodo and Di would be chosen to carry the ribbons, but I suppose the babies will look sweet.”

“But, Alice, that can’t be it,” protested Janet. “Sonya says this is the first time.”

Alice nodded her head. “The first time anybody has been chosen outside the Sophs, don’t you see?”

Phyllis looked unhappy. “I’d hate to have a custom of years broken, even for Sonya and Hester,” she said, “and I don’t believe it. I’m going to see if Helen has had a letter.”

“I’ll walk down with you,” said Alice, “and

see if we have any news from the girls. They'd be sure to tell us if such a thing has happened."

Mary tugged at Janet's skirts. "Can't we see the lambs?" she teased.

"Poor infants!" Janet replied. "Come along and we'll see them now. Hurry back, girls, I am dying of anxiety," she called, as Phyllis and Alice started off down the driveway.

It was a long hot walk to the village and they were glad to reach the shade of the post office.

There was a letter written in Dodo's round hand for Alice and she opened it at once.

"Mother dear"—(she read)

"I am feeling very solemn. Di and I have been chosen to carry the ribbons for the Seniors! Think of that, and we are only new girls. Isn't it wonderful about Hester and Sonya?

"Now, Mother, about our dresses. We've

only worn our white crêpes once, and Di and I would rather have you come down to Commencement than have new dresses; and how I wish Lorry and Debby could come too, but one of you must.

“Heaps of love from us both.

“Dodo.”

“Blessed lamb!” said her stepmother.
“We’ll all go, and they shall have new dresses to boot.”

CHAPTER III

IN NEW YORK

THE train should have had leaves twined around the funnel of its engine or something to differentiate it from other ordinary trains, for it bore from Old Chester five very excited persons.

There were the Twins, looking very lovely in tan tweed suits, and small tan hats with perky yellow feathers in the sides; and Lorry and Debby, one in blue homespun and the other in rose, with hats to match; and Alice, looking as young as any of them in gray that was very becoming.

As the train pulled into the Grand Central Station they were all ready, and waiting to get off long before anybody else.

"They'll be at the gate, of course," said Lorry. "My, I'm crazy to see them."

"They'll be inside the gate if I know anything about Sally," laughed Janet; and sure enough, the first persons they saw were the three girls, Daphne and Sally and Natalie.

"Where's the wonderful Helen I've heard so much about?" asked Nat, after the first greetings were over.

"Yes, don't tell me she isn't coming to see that cunning sister of hers!" exclaimed Sally.

"She'll be here tomorrow, she couldn't leave school a minute before; and the twins are going to buy Hester's dress for her," Debby explained.

They were standing still in the middle of the station and the crowds surged around them. Red caps, laden with bags, went about their business unperturbed and the train men called the list of stopping places for their own particular trains in bored voices, while the general public dashed thither and yon and got in each other's way.

The girls seemed not to notice the noise and confusion, they were so intent on their own affairs.

"Where to, Miss?" asked the patient porter for the fourth time. Alice heard him for the first time.

"Oh, a taxi; I suppose we must take our bags to a hotel."

"Hotel indeed!" exclaimed Sally. "My Aunt Jane's Poll Parrot, who ever heard of such a thing?"

"Alice, you and Lorry and Debby are coming with me and the Twins are going with Sally and Nat," Daphne drawled. "We would have divided you up, but you know of course that we can't separate the Twins."

"My house first," Sally said, and she gave the address to the driver.

"Go through the park," ordered Daphne, grandly.

"Why, Taffy, that's a good six blocks out of our way and I know the girls have seen all the country they want and they'd rather go up

Madison Avenue and see the shops," Sally protested.

So the order was changed and for the rest of the ride there were exclamations of: "Oh, do look at that stunning coat!" "What a duck of a hat!" "Do look at that picture of the Prince of Wales."

Mrs. Ladd was waiting for them in her dignified drawing-room and they fell upon her with embraces. She was a handsome woman and Sally looked very much like her.

The Twins left their bags in the guest-room and they all went on to Daphne's.

As the maid let them in the door a tall lanky figure got up from the seat before the open fireplace in the big hall.

"Chuck," said Daphne, "what are you doing here at this time of day?"

Chuck smiled a superior smile and held out a small envelope.

"Theatre tickets!" exclaimed Sally. "What a fiancé to have! It almost makes me wish I were engaged."

The others greeted Chuck, who was not in the least fussed at being the center of attraction among so many girls.

Mrs. Hillis heard the commotion and came downstairs to greet her guests. She asked most particularly about Auntie Mogs and Nan.

"Are you staying for luncheon, Chuck?" she asked, smiling at her future son-in-law, "or are you afraid of so many girls?"

"Scared to death, but don't tell them," laughed Chuck. "No, Mother-in-law, I shall go, but please see that they are all ready to go out for dinner at seven o'clock sharp."

"And you and Dad and Mr. and Mrs. Ladd be ready, too, mind," he added.

"Why, Chuck, you must have hired the theatre," teased Alice.

"Wait and see," Chuck replied.

They had a dainty luncheon at the Hillis home and then they set off on their shopping trip.

They went to a store famous for its chil-

dren's clothes and there they reveled in fluffy white things.

The Twins chose two sheer white dresses trimmed with French embroidery for Hester and Sonya, and then came the hunt for just the right thing for Dodo and Di. They found them at last, dresses in finest linen trimmed with Irish lace.

"Now let's all take something to Miss Hull," suggested Daphne. "All the girls will take her candy; let's be original."

"I know the very thing!" exclaimed Phyllis. "The last time we were there she said the Guest Book was almost full and she'd have to be getting a new one."

The others decided nothing could be nicer, so they went off on a tour of the book-shops and finally selected one bound in Florentine leather.

"Now home and dress for dinner. Lorry, I want you to look your very best," Daphne said as they climbed to the top of a Fifth Avenue bus.

"Why?" asked Lorry, innocently.

"Because you're so good looking when you're all dolled up," Sally said quickly, and she frowned at Daphne.

The two families, Daphne's and Sally's, lived on the same street and the girls parted in the middle of the block. They were to meet at Daphne's at seven o'clock.

At a quarter to seven the doorbell rang and Daphne, who was in the hall, ran to answer it.

Chuck and four other boys stood on the steps.

"Are they here yet?" whispered Chuck. "Jimmy hasn't guessed a thing."

"Come in, hurry up. They are just starting downstairs. Come up to the living-room," Daphne said hastily, and turned to meet her other guests.

They were David Malone and Jimmy Crosley and Nick DeFoe, artists who had spent a happy two weeks at Helen's two winters before, and who had returned for the

Twins' wedding. They were followed by Grant Weeks.

"Jimmy, will you do something for me?" Daphne begged. "Stay down here in the hall a minute and open the door for the Twins and Sally and Nat when they come."

"Honored," said Jimmy. "I'll be so glad to see the Twins I'll probably hug them both; but why, oh, why, dear lady, when you were about it, didn't you get Lorry down here?"

"The Twins coming tonight?" demanded David. "How perfectly splendid! Is Helen of Troy with them by any happy chance?"

"No. Isn't it too bad Helen can't come till tomorrow!" Daphne told him, as she and the four boys went upstairs. They met Lorry and Debby coming down. They both looked radiant in blue and pink and Lorry's eyes were shining.

"Oh, D-d-d-d-debby," stuttered Nick, "this is w-w-w-wonderful!" and Debby looked as though she agreed with him.

"Lorry dear, go down and open the door

for the Twins, won't you?" Daphne asked carelessly, and Lorry, thinking that Jimmy had not come, went down the rest of the steps with a sigh of disappointment.

Jimmy was standing by the door, but he turned around as he heard the light fall of her footsteps.

"Vision of loveliness!" he exclaimed. "Rapturous sight! O, Lorry, you are really here!"

Jimmy always talked in the most exaggerated manner possible, but when he talked to Lorry he always meant what he said.

"Yes, I'm here." Lorry, the Spartan, spoke in the most matter-of-fact way, but her heart was skipping a beat as she said it.

Jimmy looked at her in despair. "Oh, Lorry, you ought to fall into my arms at least," he told her. "Aren't you glad to see me?"

"Of course," Lorry agreed, "but I can't be silly."

"Silly? You say 'silly' when my heart is

breaking for one small kind word," and Jimmy thumped his chest in the location of his heart and pretended to weep.

"Yes, and I mean silly, too," Lorry replied tartly; and then in a woe-begone little voice she added: "I don't believe you're a bit glad to see me."

Jimmy could stop fooling when the occasion demanded and he stopped now.

"Lorry dear, forgive me. Down deep inside you know how happy I am to see you, and I just act foolish to cover up my emotions," he said.

Lorry smiled and held out her hand. Jimmy took it and squeezed it, just as the Twins and Nat and Sally came up the front steps.

They had dinner at one of the big restaurants and after that ceremony went on to a theatre, where they saw an amusing comedy, with a star that put everybody in mind of Jimmy.

Natalie Ladd and Grant Weeks got on

famously, but when Janet asked Natalie whether or not she had forgotten Screw Williams she said *No* so abruptly that everyone laughed at her.

The next morning the girls had their breakfasts in bed, dressed in a leisurely fashion, and were almost late in starting for the station to meet Helen.

What was their surprise on finding the boys all there ahead of them, armed with flowers and candy!

Helen was delighted with her reception, and the transfer from the Grand Central Station to the Pennsylvania was made in a fleet of taxi-cabs.

"I wish you were all coming, too," laughed Helen, "and, oh, by the way, Alice, here's a letter that came for you. Mr. Westlake gave it to Ivan to give to me. He said you'd be glad to get it."

Alice looked at the letter in surprise.

"Indeed, I am glad to get it," she said. "It's from one of the dearest women in the

world. She was the only friend my aunt and uncle had who was ever nice to me."

"Oh, Mother, fancy anyone being anything but nice to you!" laughed Lorry, as though the idea seemed ridiculous.

"Read it, Mrs. Westlake, I'm consumed with curiosity," said Jimmy.

Alice read and gasped, looked at her audience, didn't see them, and went back to her letter and more gasps.

"Oh, t-t-t-tell us," stuttered Nick.

"I will," Alice promised. "Let me get my breath. Mrs. Morley has given me her camp in the Adirondacks for this summer. There are ten cabins and a main hall; and, oh, I've seen pictures of it and it's all wonderful. All she asks me to do is to take care of her fourteen-year-old niece while they go abroad. We'll have a gorgeous time, and you must all come and stay as long as you like."

"When do we start?" asked Jimmy, the irrepressible.

The rest talked at once until the porter, who

was getting nervous, touched Phyllis' arm.

"You all had better get to your train if you want to catch it," he said.

The goodbyes were hasty, but as Alice said, it wasn't as if they were for long.

"The trouble with good times is that they are never quite perfect unless Peter and English are with us," said Janet.

"I know," agreed Phyllis. "We'll just have to forget we're anything but Hilltoppers for the next forty-eight hours."

"I hope Prue and Ann and Gladys are at the station to meet us," said Sally.

"I hope Chuck can come to camp this summer," said Daphne.

CHAPTER IV

AT HILLTOP

DODO was in the gym, dressed in her white gym suit, and she had the basket ball under one arm. Di watched her unseen from the doorway, and wondered for the hundredth time what she would do if her sister's team lost the game that day.

"Dodo can stand defeat as well as victory, but, oh! it will be hard because the Twins and Mother will be here," she said to herself.

Just then Dodo turned around and saw her.

"Di, they'll be here in an hour, and I can't seem to realize it," she said.

Di nodded her head. "You ought to be dressing," she replied gently, as though she were talking to a very sick child.

Dodo heard the tone and understood it,

"Di, don't talk to me as though I were dying. We may beat the New Wing yet." She laughed a little.

"Why, Dodo, of course you'll win, and I'll get the highest score in archery, too; but it's scarey thinking about it," Di returned. "Do you know, I almost wish Mother wasn't coming."

"Not to mention the Twins," said Dodo, with a sigh.

The Westlake girls had changed since the Old Chester days. They were older and they carried the burden of Hilltop on their shoulders. This does not mean, however, that they were any less the imps of the Westlake family. They had both kept Hilltop very wide-awake all the school term; but their fun had been so spontaneous and good-natured and they had proved themselves such good sports in the finest sense of the word that school had accepted them with joy and pointed to them as general favorites.

Today was Sports Day and the basket ball

game on which Dodo played center, and the Archery Contest were to be played off between the Old and New Wings. Di had made the archery team by sheer good luck, and she was trusting to that luck to pull her through with a creditable score today.

Dodo bounced the ball to position, took quick aim and made a neat basket.

"I wish I were going to play forward instead of center," she said, "but I'm lucky to be anywhere on the team."

Di nodded. "We're both lucky," she replied, "and we've got to play up; if Lorry and Debby see us make any mistakes, they'll never forgive us. Come on, let's go and dress. I have Miss Hull's permission to go down to the station to meet them with the Seniors."

"Who's going?" asked Dodo, as she put the ball away, and joined her sister in the walk to their room.

"Beatrix Standish, because she's Prue's sister, and Babs McGuire; then of course the two babes are going, and Sonya is at this mo-

ment sitting with her things on on the front porch."

"Bless the child," said Dodo. "Come along, let's hurry."

The door of their room was open, and they heard voices as they came along the corridor.

Di pushed open the door. There were three girls in the room, Pansy Charteris, Nona Banks and Joan Ferriss. They were all busily engaged eating peanut butter and discussing the probable events of the day.

"Di will score big," said Pansy, "because she has the luck of—I don't know what; and Dodo will be all right as center, though why they don't put her on as forward, and take off that gangly, long-legged Myra Green, I don't know."

"Myra's a senior, and this is her last time to play," said Nona. "Be charitable, my children; besides, we needn't worry, our class will make a bully record, even if the Old Wing does lose."

"But the Old Wing can't lose. Babs says it mustn't, and so say we all of us." Joan turned around and saw the owners of the room standing in the doorway.

"Oh, come in, won't you, and have some of your peanut butter? We were out in our room, the cupboards were bare, so we foraged in here and found quite a lot."

"Very friendly, I must say," laughed Dodo, "but now you've got to clear out. The Twins will be here in less than an hour and we want their room to be shipshape."

"Why not make them do the fixing?" Di suggested. "They messed it up, and we have barely time to get to the station."

Pansy looked out of the window across the broad green lawn that was bordered by old trees, and sighed.

"Wonder when we come back, years from now, if all this excitement will be caused by our arrival?"

"The Twins are certainly somebodies," commented Joan. "I'm dying to see them."

"And your stepmother, too," added Nona. "Miss Hull thinks an awful lot of her."

"Don't call her our stepmother. She's our mother and we adore her, and anyhow I hate that word," said Dodo.

The girls had been picking up as they talked, and Dodo and Di had changed their dresses.

"I'll like meeting the lovely Daphne and Sally and her Aunt Jane's Poll Parrot, too," said Pansy.

"Does she really travel with a bird?" asked Nona. "I think it's silly."

Dodo and Di looked at each other and solemnly winked.

"Always," said Dodo, and Nona looked puzzled.

"She carries it in a gold cage and she consults it about everything."

"If she doesn't bring it this time you'll have a chance to see it this summer. The Twins are going to have Sally and Daphne and Nat up this summer when you visit us." Di was mak-

ing plans in her quick mind to provide a real parrot for the mystification of her friends.

"Won't those girls be awfully old for us to go around with?" asked Joan, who saw the joke and wanted to laugh.

"Say that ten minutes after you've met the Twins," replied Dodo. "They are every age. They can have as good a time with Sonya and Hester as they can with Lorry and Debby."

"Wait till you meet them," said Di, with a wise smile.

Ten minutes later they were hurrying down the hill that led to the little station where trains stopped on signal for Hilltop, and the tiny village that cuddled at its base.

One train was in sight down the long dusty track and another could be heard whistling at the siding in the other direction.

"The Twins get here first," cried Sonya, and she danced up and down with excitement.

Hester, who stood beside her, said primly: "The Twins and Helen."

"Of course," agreed Sonya, "and do you suppose they have brought us new dresses to wear tomorrow?"

"I don't care if they haven't—that is, much," replied Hester.

The train rushed in and snorted to a halt as if it were in a great hurry, and wanted to be off at once. The two Seniors, Babs, the president of the Senior Class, and Beatrix, the chief of sports, assumed their most dignified manner and stepped forward to meet the laughing group that tumbled out of the train.

Di and Dodo made a rush for Lorry and Debby and Alice; Sonya and Hester fell upon the Twins and Helen, while Sally and Daphne were left to do the honors.

Soon everybody had been introduced and there was a buzz of conversation. The train that had been waiting on the siding pulled in and for a second there was silence as the girls on the platform scanned the windows for a sight of Prue and Gladys and Ann.

"There they are," cried Daphne, as the

three girls jumped off in the midst of hand luggage and trainmen.

"Here we certainly are," drawled Prue. "How's everybody? I want a kiss from each one of you."

"Is it great to be back?" demanded Ann. "I'll say it is," and she hugged Sally in a fond embrace.

"Dodo and Di, how Hilltoppish you look," laughed Gladys.

"Let's pile our luggage in the carriages and walk up the hill," suggested Alice.

The others agreed and they were soon trudging up the hill.

"Many old girls coming back this Commencement?" asked Janet—she was talking to Babs.

"Dozens of them. We're going to have the most thrilling picnic."

"I can't walk as well as I used to," laughed Daphne, limping in her high heels.

As they turned a bend in the road Hilltop loomed above them. They all stopped to pay

silent respect. Lorry was the only one in the party who had never seen it before, and she drew a deep breath as its beauty broke upon her.

"Oh," she said, a little sadly, "it's glorious! How I wish I might call it mine!"

Nobody answered her for a minute and then Babs spoke up: "Well, even if you can't you're just as Hilltoppish as the rest of us. I don't know why, but you and your sister belong." Then she stopped and blushed.

Dodo and Di swelled with pride, and Janet said with her little laugh: "No wonder they made you president of the Senior Class, my dear, you deserved it."

CHAPTER V

THE GAME

THE gym was packed and a silence of expectancy hung over the room as the two teams met and their captains shook hands. Dodo's gaze darted about the room and finally located the Twins, also Alice, Lorry and Debby. It was perhaps Lorry whom she sought more than the rest, Lorry the Spartan, who had taught her as a baby to keep a stiff upper lip, and to take a defeat bravely. And it did look like a defeat, for the New Wing had the advantage of size; then, too, three of the girls had played on the team the year before.

Inside Debby was all little shivers as the first ball was tossed up between her and her tall opponent. She missed it, and it seemed only a matter of seconds before it was in the

hands of the New Wing forward and toppled gently into the basket.

The New Wing had it all their own way for the rest of the first half, and it was a dejected Dodo who sought the comfort of her sisters after the whistle blew.

Alice was the only really cheerful one of the lot.

"Got any substitutes?" she asked as the captain, Marge Bird, came up to her.

"Yes, but they are no good, and our weak point is our forward. You see the way Dodo gets the ball to her, and she misses every basket. I try, but I can't be everywhere at once." Marge was the other forward and not overly strong on baskets herself.

Alice considered for a minute, then she said abruptly: "Are you afraid of hurting Myra Green's feelings?"

"No," Marge told her, "it's the game that counts."

Alice hesitated. "I don't want to butt in," she said, "but I was captain of the Old Wing

my senior year, and I still remember, so that I know just how you are feeling. May I make a suggestion?"

"Oh, please do!" begged Marge. "I admit I'm beaten, so you can't blame my team."

"I don't blame anybody, and you're not beaten. Do as I say and see what happens. Change Myra to center and bring Dodo up to forward. That child can make baskets—I've seen her. I was watching her just before the game. Try my plan—it can't be any worse than it is now."

Marge nodded and went over to speak to the gym teacher. When the whistle blew Dodo was dancing in the forward position.

The ball was tossed up between Myra and the New Wing center, and Myra, thoroughly mad, and determined to show that she could play any position on the old team, shot into the air and sent the ball straight into the hands of the Old Wing second center, who in turn threw it over the guard's head and to Dodo,

who made a perfect basket, setting the whole school shouting excitedly.

After that the score piled up for the Old Wing and by the time the last whistle blew the score was a tie.

The umpire tossed the ball for an extra two minutes and the New Wing center was so excited that she ran with it and a foul was called. Dodo took the ball and walked slowly to the line; her heart was beating and her cheeks were red.

"Steady, Dodo," whispered Lorry, and Dodo threw the ball, it fell in the basket straight as an arrow, and the room cheered.

The game was over, and after defeats for the two previous years the Old Wing had come into its own again.

The team perched Dodo on their shoulders, and caught Alice up in the procession. Everybody sang, and if the New Wing was a little sore at heart they were sporty enough not to show it.

Publicly, the tears running down her

cheeks, Lorry kissed Dodo, and lost for the first time in her life the title of "Spartan."

The Archery Contest followed next, and the school was thrilled once more by a tied score. They were going to draw lots for some one to decide it when Miss Hull rose and addressed them.

"Girls," she began, "we have with us to-day the two girls who are noted for their scores in archery, Janet and Bess, both twins, known to you as the 'Red Twins' and just 'The Twins.' I suggest that we let them decide the victory of the wings today by each one shooting five arrows."

The school greeted this suggestion with delight. Janet and Bess jumped up and met for the first time that day beside Miss Hull's chair.

"Bess, isn't this thrilling?" Janet laughed, as she held out her hand.

"I should say it was," said Bess. "I haven't shot a bow since I left school."

"Neither have I," replied Janet, "so we're even."

"But I'm going to win," said Bess, with something of her old arrogance.

Janet only laughed, and strung her bow. Di, who had made a very good score during the afternoon, stood beside her, and held the quiver of arrows.

Janet loosed the first one and hit the red. A shout went up and Bess bit her lip.

Janet's score was fifteen and she sat down, contented that at least she had not disgraced the Old Wing.

Bess was next and she made the score of thirteen and sat down, almost in tears, but she remembered in time that she was a Hill-topper and managed a smile.

The girls were all delighted, and the Old Wing found itself victorious in two of the great sports of Hilltop.

"Janet," said Phyllis, as they dressed that night in one of the guest's rooms, "I'd have died if you had lost."

"Oh, Phyl, don't talk about it. I could see Di's pleading look out of the corner of my eye, and I thought of the Old Wing, and, well, I just *had* to beat Bess, though in a way I'm sorry."

"That's because you are a better loser than she is, but I'm not a bit sorry, and the school was thrilled from its head to its heels. I heard Beth Bradford say she hoped you'd get it because you were the popular idol—and she's a New Wing girl."

"I'll bet she said *we* were popular idols, not *I*."

"Well, perhaps she did," admitted Phyllis.

There was a knock on the door and Sally and Daphne followed it in, without waiting for a reply. Sally had on a peach-blown dress of sheerest georgette, her black hair contrasting with it beautifully, and of course Daphne was a picture in pale silver and blue.

The Twins were struggling into yellow frocks that fell straight from their graceful

shoulders and showed off their figures to perfection.

"Well, here we are, the quartette together once more!" exclaimed Sally. "Let's go out for a walk before we have to join the others."

"Good idea, and we'll pretend we are just kids again," replied Phyllis. "It won't take much to make me feel that."

"Oh, I feel a million," laughed Daphne. "It's from living in these guest-rooms, and not on our own corridor."

They all went out across the broad lawn and lingered over the old familiar spots and their conversation was mostly: "Do you remember the day——"

"I wish Poppy and Gwen were here today; we won't have half a chance to see them tomorrow," complained Daphne. "Here comes the trio. Let's meet them as if we were still in school."

The rest took the hint at once, and as the three sauntered up to them, their arms entwined, they greeted them with:

"Hello, you three!"

"Finished your history for tomorrow?"

"Let's all sit together at the lecture tonight."

"Did you swipe my peanut butter?"

Prue and Gladys and Ann replied at once:

"The Latin's awfully hard for tomorrow."

"Meet you after school for archery practice."

"How about a raid on the kitchen for some cookies?"

Then they all stopped and laughed.

"Oh, if it were only true!" exclaimed Ann.

"Let's all go to the Seniors' sanctum sanctorum and repeat our vow." This suggestion came from Janet and the rest needed no second invitation.

They went up the steps, through the great hall, and up to the little room with its balcony over the piazza, which year after year the senior class called its very own.

Fortune favored them, for the room was empty, and they went inside with a feeling of

reverence born of the recollection of many happy days spent within it.

They clasped one another's hands, and repeated their oath of loyalty.

"If we didn't all live so far away from each other," bemoaned Gladys.

"But Alice is going to invite you all to camp this summer," said Janet, "and think of the fun we'll have."

"Oh, we'll all come!" exclaimed Ann.

"Is she going to ask the boys, too?" questioned Prue, who was a little partial to boys.

"Sure to," replied Daphne. "She has already asked Chuck and the others, and by the time she includes the Old Chester ones there'll easily be enough to go round."

They fell to making plans, and for the minute forgot that they were anything but school-girls laying out a longed-for vacation. They were rudely awakened when two of the seniors came in.

"Oh, Mrs. Gibbs, do excuse us for butting

in, but Mrs. Westlake is looking everywhere for you," said one of them.

"Mrs. Gibbs," laughed Janet. "No, I won't forgive you, for you have reminded me that I have been completely forgetting my husband for the last hour."

The girl's face fell. "Oh, I'm so terribly sorry," she said, and the others laughed heartily.

"Oh, my dear," said Janet, quick to see the younger girl was hurt, "I didn't mean it, of course. Where is Alice? Did she say where we were to meet her?"

The senior looked relieved.

"I'll show you," she said, and led the way to the drawing-room, where they found Alice, Lorry, Debby and Nat.

"I've been reminiscing," began Alice, "but I suddenly realized we hadn't given our gift to Miss Hull yet. We better do it before the rush begins."

"She's in her room now," said Sally. "It's a good time to find her."

"Let the Twins carry the book," insisted Alice, "and now come on."

They trooped to Miss Hull's door, escorted by Ann and Prue and Gladys, who went just that far and no farther.

Miss Hull called a cheery "Come in," and when she saw them she jumped up from her desk and went to them with open arms.

"Girls, girls, it's so good to have you here," she said, smiling. "You can't think what a happy Commencement this is, with Sonya and Hester and Dodo and Di all taking part."

"Where is Helen?" asked Phyllis, suddenly. "She should be here."

"She's with the babies," explained Miss Hull. "I saw her only a few minutes ago. Hester is showing her around. Don't disturb her."

"Not for worlds," laughed Alice. "Give Miss Hull the book, girls, and then we will leave her in peace, for I know she is awfully busy."

Miss Hull was delighted, and before they left they all signed their names in it.

“Only the dance, at which we’ll be grown-up onlookers, and Commencement exercises, at which we’ll feel a hundred, and the picnic with the seniors to keep us in place,” laughed Janet. “I guess we are through with being young for another year.”

The others nodded their heads, regretfully agreeing with her.

“Oh, well,” said Phyllis, the philosopher, “it’s an awful lot of fun being grown-up, too.”
And once more the others agreed.

CHAPTER VI

OLD FRIENDS

LOU ANN FARRADAY and Geraldine Newcome stood at a distance from Hester and Sonya, surveying them critically.

"There's no doubt about it, they do look sweet," said Gerry, with a tremendous sigh, then, to take the edge off the compliment, she added sharply: "Mind you don't make any mistakes."

Lou Ann gave them another glance. "Yes," she said, with relief, "I think they'll be a credit to us."

The two younger girls took their honor in a different way. Hester was sedate about it, and so solemn that she was almost in tears; while Sonya was frankly in tears, but they were tears of happiness. She was so excited

that she could do nothing but dance. She was about to perch on the end of the bed—they were in the little children's dormitory waiting for word to join the procession that was forming in the Ball Room, that being what Hilltop called its Assembly Hall.

“Don't sit down,” exclaimed Lou Ann. “You'll wrinkle your dress. Stand up, and we'll tell you something, but it's not to make you vain, remember.”

Hester and Sonya looked at her inquiringly, and then at Gerry. They had stood much at the hands of the older girls, in fact they had been bossed unmercifully. Now came their reward.

“What we have to tell you is this,” began Lou Ann, importantly, “you have been chosen for a great honor, this carrying flowers and helping the seniors graduate, and everything, so Gerry and I feel that we needn't call you babies any more since we can really play with you as equals.”

“You see, you've grown up such a lot since

you came to Hilltop," Gerry took up the recital—she began by being condescending, but ended frankly: "Anyway, we tired of taking care of you, we'd rather play with you," she said.

Hester gulped, and looked terribly pleased and happy, but Sonya threw her arms about Lou Ann and kissed her and then around Gerry.

"Oh, but this is an exciting day," she began, and would have kissed them all over again but for the arrival of Dodo and Di, who hurried in, their arms full of roses and delphinium, carrying besides a basket of flowers for Sonya and Hester.

Before either of the younger ones could speak, Lou Ann demanded: "Do they look all right? Of course, Miss Helen and Miss Alice dressed them, but we put the finishing touches to them. I brushed Sonya's hair for an hour and it really looks quite shiny."

"Poor Sonya," laughed Di. "Yes, they look adorable, and very Hilltoppish, but come

along, the rest are waiting for us on the front porch."

"Go down and take your places, girls, and we'll lead the babes to the head of the line," Dodo directed.

The younger ones did not mind being called "babies" by Dodo and Di; but Hester made up her mind that when they got home for the summer something must be done to stop them from using that title. In the back of each one's mind was the idea that she would act very "grown-up" in Old Chester.

Dodo and Di hurried them down to the porch; then with the entire school behind them they started off for the village church, where all the Commencement exercises were always held.

The guests were already in their pews and with a flush of pride the Twins and Alice and Helen and Debby and Lorry saw the four girls march slowly up the aisle.

It was a pretty service and the sermon was just the right length. The exercises followed

in the Ball Room and then all the visitors hurried to the platform to offer their congratulations to the graduating class.

Poppy and Gwen caught the Twins by the arm and held them tight.

"We don't want to lose you in this mob," said Poppy. "Our husbands are coming for us in the car after the picnic and we do so want you to meet them."

"Of course that would be wonderful," replied Janet. "I wish we could introduce you to ours. When are you coming North?"

"Oh, perhaps this summer," replied Gwen. "We'll surely let you know if we do."

"Does this make you think of the day you carried the ribbons for us? It does me, and the Sophs are nearly as nice as you were." Poppy looked at Dodo and Di, who were standing across the room, and smiled.

"Now, Poppy," said Phyllis, "no sophomore class was ever as nice as ours, and no seniors were ever as nice as yours. Ask Miss Hull if you don't believe me."

"I declare," said Gwen, "but I think you are just about right. I don't believe there ever was a better year at Hilltop than our last one, and that doesn't sound very flattering, but you all know what I mean."

Sally and Daphne joined them and the six walked out of the room together, to be joined by Ann and Prue and Gladys and later by Alice and Helen and Debby and Lorry.

"My Aunt Jane's Poll Parrot," said Sally, "any more memories and I shall just naturally weep."

"I know, it's tearful business," laughed Poppy.

"Does anybody know where the picnic is going to be this year?" asked Daphne.

"I do," said Prue. "My small, suddenly grown-up sister told me, but I wouldn't whisper it for the world. It's a state secret."

"Well, I wish I had worn other shoes," complained Daphne. "If we have to walk too far, I'll give up."

"Give up at Hilltop! You will not if I have to carry you," declared Sally.

The picnic was held at the very selfsame spot where the Twins' and Poppy's classes had held it a few years before, for the Seniors of this year had patterned their class on those two years with admirable results.

For the first few minutes after their arrival in the shaded glen everybody was busy saying "How-do-you-dos." There were over a hundred old girls there. Many of them were before the Twins' time, but Alice knew them and they greeted her enthusiastically and one and all reminded her what an imp she had been.

After luncheon Alice went over to speak to Miss Hull. The principal of Hilltop rose and with her hand on Alice's shoulder turned to address the others.

"Girls, I know you will be glad to hear what Alice has to say, and I am sure you will give her your hearty co-operation."

Alice smiled and began her speech:

"When I was at school you used to call me an imp, now I expect to be called a nuisance."

The girls laughed at this and some of them groaned.

"As a school, of course, we are the best on earth," she continued, "but we are woefully lacking, and, oh, so woefully lazy. We are divided by miles, of course, but that shouldn't hinder us in doing more than we do for charity, and just now there is need in our part of the country for help."

The girls looked at one another and nodded.

"I don't know how much or how little you have given to the Southern flood sufferers, but I know that as alumni we have done nothing, and I propose to raise a fund and send it in the name of Hilltop."

Thunders of applause echoed in the glen, and the girls cheered Alice.

"I shall ask Miss Hull to name some one to collect, and I might add, girls, that Hilltop expects every girl to do her duty." Alice said this with exaggerated warmth.

"I think," said Miss Hull, and she did not hesitate a minute in her choice, "I'll appoint the Twins, and Alice, I insist as the idea is yours, that you send the money with an appropriate note to the Headquarters of the American Red Cross."

Like magic, paper and pencils were found from various pockets, and the Twins collected money in some cases and promises on paper in others.

Suddenly Sally jumped to her feet and without the formality of an introduction, announced: "I've got a wonderful idea."

"Did Aunt Jane's Poll Parrot give it to you?" demanded Poppy from her seat by Gwen at which all the girls laughed and Sally nodded.

"Just where I got it," she declared. "Now, keep still, everybody, and listen. This summer wherever there are old Hilltop girls there are bound to be house-parties. I know we are going to have a wonderful one at Alice's summer camp——"

"Hear her," laughed Alice, "you'd think it were mine."

"——and I propose that we all give a play, charging admission, and send the proceeds to Alice, so she can forward it to the Red Cross."

"Sally, that's a brain wave," called one of the older girls. "I was wondering what to do with my house-party this summer, now I know."

"How do we ever get along without Sally and that remarkable bird?" laughed Poppy.

"Oh, I often consult him," replied Gwen.

There were many girls who did not know about Sally and her Aunt Jane's Poll Parrot, and for the next few minutes the girls who did were busy explaining.

It was a tired but happy party that reached Hilltop after the picnic, and found Dodo with Di, Sonya and Hester waiting for them on the front steps. Nat, also Lorry and Debby had gone as guests to the picnic, but the younger children were barred.

"Did you have a good time" asked Dodo,

rather forlornly. "We've been saying good-bye to all the old haunts, and it's made us very sad and doleful. We're glad you're back."

"Nat, do you wish you had been to Hilltop instead of Newcomb, where you went?"

"Never," laughed Nat. "Newcomb is first, even if I did only go there a year, but I'll tell you what: Hilltop is next best, and I will say the girls are the best in the world."

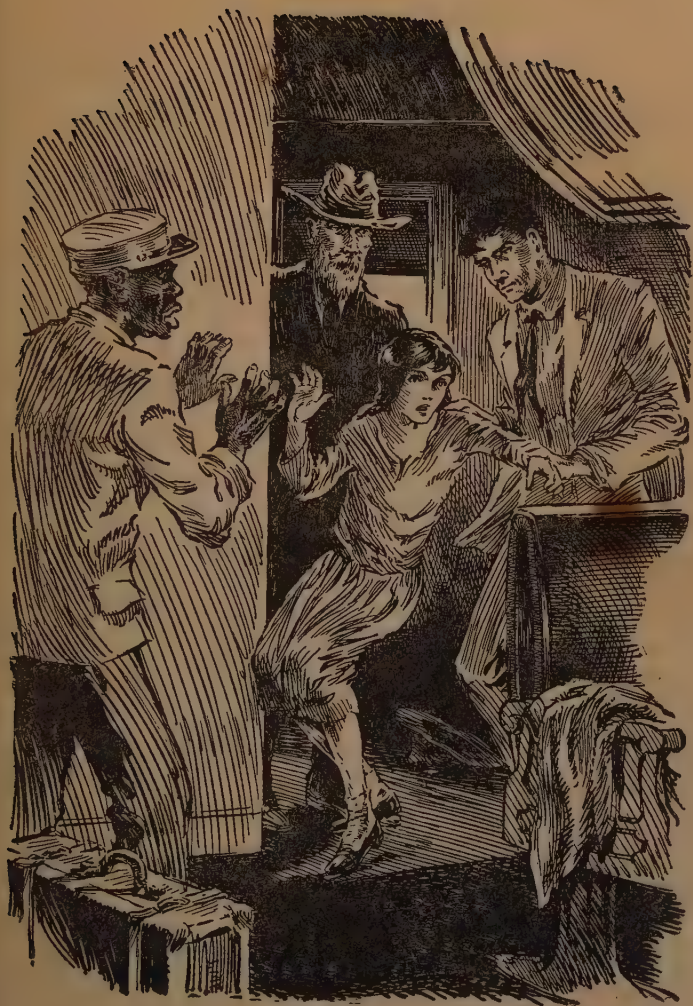
"Which proves that Hilltop is the better of the two," laughed Di.

Miss Hull looked at Lorry and Debby as their sister was speaking, then she turned to Lorry.

"What do you think?" she asked.

"Oh," sighed Lorry, "if I could have my wish, I would have graduated in the class with the Twins, only I would have been the Captain of the basket ball team, and we would have won all the games."

Debby nodded. "That's what I'd wish, too, only now we'll have to wait until Dodo is



A curious sight met their eyes.



Captain, and get our thrill that way."

Miss Hull looked at Dodo, and the latter flushed scarlet.

"Oh, Debby, I'll never be captain," she denied, hotly.

The Twins came to the rescue. "Cheer up, Dodo, you never can tell," said Janet.

"Three cheers for the future captain of the Hilltop team," called Phyllis, and they were given, lusty ones from the throats of all the old girls, who had almost but not *quite* forgotten how to cheer.

"Gracious," Di said to herself. "I'm lucky they didn't ask me what I wanted. I'd look nice saying I am going to be Chief of Sports, wouldn't I?"

Janet saw her, and remembered that Dodo and Di were really twins, so it would never do to cheer one without the other.

"Three cheers for the future Chief of Sports," she called, putting her hand on Di's shoulder.

"You never can keep anything from the Twins," said Di, as she blushed as red as Dodo.

CHAPTER VII

AN INCIDENT ON THE TRAIN

THE porter was a disagreeable person with a wart on the end of his nose and an almost visible chip on his shoulder. He did not approve of Hilltop, and the attendant fuss of the yearly exodus of girls on his train. It was true the tips were good, but what were tips to all the worry, and this year there was more than ever. The girls filled two-thirds of his nice, shiny car and he trembled at the thought of candied fingers on his clean plush.

He eyed Sonya and Hester with positive dislike, also kept a wary eye on Dodo and Di.

"I won't do nothing for them. They can ring as much as they please," he said to him-

self, "that is, 'cept I might get a drink of water for that one," and he looked grudgingly at Daphne.

It was true Hilltop practically owned the car, and they talked back and forth, also visited from one seat to the other, and sat six in a berth to the detriment of the company's plush.

"I never remember a jollier mob going home, do you?" asked Sally of the Twins and Daphne.

"Never except once," said Janet, "the year we were Seniors, when the boys came for the dance, and we all went home in Mr. Hillis' private car. Do you remember what fun we had at dinner?"

"My Aunt Jane's Poll Parrot," replied Sally, "I should say I did remember, but this is almost as good, though I don't expect the lovely Taffy to agree with me. Because why? Well, of course, our Chuck isn't here and that makes such a difference."

Daphne only smiled and looked out of the

window. She was seldom known to be fussed, and never about Chuck.

"Dear boy, I do miss him," she said softly just to tease Sally.

"Well, thank goodness, I'm an old maid," said Sally, and went off to join another group.

"Girls, you are all coming to camp this summer, so let's make plans," suggested Alice, when the girls who were not of their party had gone back to their seats, and left only those whom Alice had invited.

"I wish Prue and Gladys and Ann were here," said Lorry. "They are such fun; the more I see of them the younger I think they are."

"Imagine Prue growing up," laughed Janet.

"I must ask some girls to amuse the two imps, we're a bit old," Alice began, but Dodo interrupted her.

"Can't we have our class, Mother?" she asked. "I'm sure they'd all come."

Alice considered. "I think we'd better

give two house-parties, for big as the camp is it won't anywhere near accommodate all of Hilltop."

Plans for the summer filled the air, and the slight commotion at the other end of the car after a stop at a small station did not disturb them at once.

A shrill scream suddenly brought them all back to the present, and they looked toward the end of the car where a curious sight met their eyes.

Standing in the passageway was a gaunt, tall girl in a dress made of burlap, and pulling her by either wrist were two giant men. The porter stood before them, gesticulating wildly.

"I tells you all this car ain't no lunatic asylum," he yelled; but the two men paid no attention to him and renewed their efforts to induce the girl to enter the car.

Phyllis took in the situation at once and guessed at an explanation. She approached the two men and held out her hand encour-

agingly to the girl, who was moaning in sheer terror.

"Pull harder, Stew—aim to git her in," said the bigger of the two men.

"Stop pulling," said Phyllis. "Leave the child alone, and let me talk to her."

She walked to the girl and said something soothing, but the girl kicked at her savagely.

"You all will get yourself hurt," the porter complained. "Better let me stop the train and put 'em off, they're just no 'count mountain whites, anyway."

Phyllis turned to him in a fury.

"You go away, you are frightening her," she ordered, and the man turned to obey.

Phyllis next turned her attention to the two men before her.

"Let go of her, and see what she does." But before they had a chance to loosen their hold, the girl sank prostrate in the corner, sobbing as though her heart would break.

Phyllis dropped to her knees beside her and

AN INCIDENT ON THE TRAIN 77

pillowed her head on her shoulder. The girl saw her, screamed shrilly and fainted dead away.

"Call a doctor quick, somebody," Phyllis ordered.

By that time the conductor and the Pullman conductor were making their way through the mob of curious girls from the other end of the car.

"Never seen a car before, poor kid," said the older of the two. "John, go through the train and see if you can find a doctor. She's likely to die of terror."

Phyllis was throwing water in the girl's face, but she lay there rigid, her eyes staring at the ceiling of the car.

The Pullman conductor came back, followed by a man who looked vaguely familiar to Phyllis, but she did not register the fact, since she was too busy caring for the prostrate girl beside her.

The doctor was too busy bringing his patient around to notice anybody in the dark

passage, and so two old friends met and worked together without recognition.

As soon as the girl was conscious she began to scream again, and the doctor had to take recourse to a sedative to restore her to some degree of composure.

The two men stood near, the taller one with a firm hold on the doctor's shoulder, as though he would hold him back from doing the poor creature any harm.

When the girl was quiet they got her to a berth and laid her down gently. Then, and not until then, did the doctor and Phyllis look at each other.

"Why, Phyllis!" the boy exclaimed.

"Jim Andrews, the very idea!" Phyllis was taken aback.

"What are you doing in this part of the country?" Jim demanded.

"We've been to Hilltop to Commencement," Phyllis explained. "You must come back and talk to Janet."

"After I try and explain to these two men

that everything is going to be safe for that poor girl," Jim replied.

He turned to the two men, and after clever questioning he learned that they were mountain whites, also that the girl had never been on a railway before and that they were taking her up to see a big doctor in New York. They had plenty of money, though they looked so poverty-stricken, and they were willing to spend any amount of it to cure their daughter and sister. They were hard, callous men, but they seemed to have a great love for this girl, though they treated her so roughly.

They refused to go to bed that night, and both stood up in the corridor beside her berth all night, keeping guard over her.

Jim, when he had done everything he could to make her comfortable and to make the men rest easy in their minds, came down the car to where Janet and Sally and Daphne were talking to Helen and Nat.

"Why, Jim Andrews!" the three girls who knew him exclaimed.

"Tell us all about yourself," Janet demanded.

Nat gave him one long look and then went away to talk to Lorry and Debby; Helen also made some excuse to see Alice and the three girls were left alone with Jim. Phyllis soon joined them.

"Now, Twins, I want all your news. I heard you were married, or rather I got the invitation to the wedding——"

"And we got the lovely candlesticks," broke in the Twins.

"But I haven't seen you since the house-party, and the eventful trip to the caves."

"But we thought you were busy practicing at Baltimore," said Janet.

"Where are you coming from?" demanded Phyllis.

"Oh, I've been lecturing about the country for quite some time, and just started for the East, where I shall be all summer, but don't let's talk about me. Sally, I saw Eustace Blake the other day, and we talked about you,

He's coming North this summer and hopes to see you."

Sally pretended to look indifferent, but the expression of her eyes was eager, and she waited for more news, but the subject was changed, the Twins insisting on introducing Jim to all the other girls, and especially to Alice.

"I've heard all about that house-party, and I am trying to duplicate it this summer. It would help out a lot if you would come and show me how," she said gracefully.

Jim looked at her and smiled, as people always smiled when they looked at Alice.

"Why, I think that would be wonderful, and I'd sure like to come," said Jim in his delightful Southern drawl.

After a little further talk he left them, promising to see them the next morning for breakfast.

There was not much sleep for anybody, as the two big men from the mountains talked all night in sibilant whispers.

The next morning when the young girl returned to consciousness she began to moan again, and though all the girls did their best to quiet her, it was Phyllis who finally succeeded.

"The poor child is terrified to death," she said to Janet. "If I could only get those two men away from her; but she won't let them out of her sight."

"I'll try to get them out of the way," said Janet; but she might as well have tried to move the mountains from which they came.

"Reckon we stand by Sis," said the younger one, and stand they did.

Jim came in early and did what he could for the poor frightened girl, even promising to take her to the doctor's himself. When it came time to leave the train the girl was only too anxious to go; but when she saw the huge station with its crowds of people she cowered down, and refused to move.

A mob soon surrounded her and everyone was yelling out different directions. Jim and

the Twins rushed her through a side door, but when they tried to get her into a taxi she almost died of fright.

It was Phyllis who found a horse-drawn cab, and by coaxing got the girl into it by letting her pat the horse first. Jim promised to 'phone Sally's house as soon as he had taken the girl to the hospital, and left her in the doctor's hands.

The Twins returned to the rest of their party, and in two taxis they went up to Sally's and Daphne's houses for luncheon. Later on Jim called up, saying he had made arrangements to keep in touch with the girl's father; he added that the great specialist had managed to quiet the girl almost at once, and that she was now comfortably settled in the hospital.

Everybody breathed a sigh of relief at this good news, and Sally and Daphne promised to go to the hospital and call with fruit and flowers.

"And we'll let you know," said Sally, "all

about her, and Mother's promised to get her some decent clothes."

"It was luck their having berths in our car, for otherwise we would have ridden all the way without seeing Jim, unless we had had the good fortune to run into him at breakfast."

"And I'd never have heard about Eustace Blake, and that would have been a pity," said Sally; but she said it to herself.

CHAPTER VIII

IN OLD CHESTER

LET'S make muffins for the boys to-night," Janet said as she slipped a dainty green rubber apron over her head and wriggled into it.

Phyllis was lying in the hammock reading, and she looked up rather drowsily, as though little interested.

"Let's have dinner out here on the porch, and, Jan, *don't* let's invite anybody. We've been 'companied' to death for the last week, and the boys are tired of it. I heard Peter telling English that we were running a boarding-house, and English just grunted in reply."

Janet looked guilty and her eyes sought the two distant specks that she knew to be the boys off in the far pasture. She loved com-

pany, but she loved having Peter want her by herself, oh, much better.

It was the maids' day out, and as they always went together, the girls were faced with getting dinner on this very warm night. It wasn't such a difficult task, as Jenny had left a broiled chicken in the ice-chest and the tomato and cucumber salad was all ready to be mixed. There were berries for dessert.

"I wish we could do something that the boys would like awfully well—I mean something different," saying which Phyllis sat up and the sleepiness left her expression.

"I know what you mean," replied Janet, "something for just ourselves. Wait a minute, I've got an idea. Let's make up a lunch, pack it in a basket, and take the launch over to Bowknot Island and——"

"The boys are sick of picnics, they want solid food for a change, and you know how messy salad is to eat and that tomato salad is just waiting to be eaten," Phyllis protested in one breath.

"Will you wait until I have finished what I want to say?" Janet demanded. "I wasn't proposing a picnic——"

"Oh, then, the lunch that we were to pack in the basket was for the birds," Phyllis teased.

Janet took a sofa cushion and whacked her twin over the head severely.

"Oh, pax!" cried Phyllis. "It's too hot for a roughhouse, anyway. Go on with what you were saying."

"Not a word until you promise not to interrupt again," declared Janet.

Phyllis curled herself up in the hammock and nodded. "Go on," she said, "I promise."

"Well," Janet continued, "after we have packed the lunch we will slip down to the beach, take the launch over to the island and hide it somewhere, and then come home."

"Still for the birds," Phyllis teased again.

"No, silly, do I have to draw you a diagram?" replied Janet. "Don't you see, we shall come home and eat, or rather partake of

a whopping dinner and then we will go for a paddle, you and English in one boat and Peter and me——”

“*I*, darling,” corrected Phyllis.

“Well, you know very well what I mean,” Janet went on, “Peter and *I* in the other canoe, and we’ll paddle both to a bow of the Bowknot, have a delightful evening all by ourselves, meet about ten o’clock when the boys are getting hungry, and have supper together.”

Phyllis jumped up. “Twin of my heart, I salute your marvelous mind. I never, no, never, heard of a nicer plan than yours.”

“I thank you,” said Janet sedately. “I accept your thanks in the spirit in which they are given—one of humility, I take it.”

“Did you ever know me to be so humble?” demanded Phyllis. “But enough of this nonsense; let’s go in and make the muffins,—that is, you make the muffins, and I’ll make an old-fashioned strawberry shortcake.”

They were busy for the remainder of the afternoon and when the boys came home tired out from a strenuous day, expecting to find the house full of a laughing mob, they found the welcome sight of a table set for four on the breezy side of the piazza. There were fresh peas, also string beans, and the biggest pitcher the house boasted full of iced tea, with cool looking sprigs of mint in it.

It was not as if the boys did not like company, for they did; but above all things they liked some quiet time alone with the Twins, and ever since the return from Hilltop there had been a succession of visits between the Westlakes and Helen and Auntie Mogs and Nan.

The girls were all doing everything in their power to throw Ivan and Helen together, but up to now Ivan was still shy, and Helen still very dignified.

There had been plans for the coming house-party at the camp in the Adirondacks, and it was decided that Alice and the Twins go up

first and open up the house before the rest of the party came.

Peter and English had found a man in the village who could look after the lambs, and with Ivan they expected to take a full month's vacation.

"Thank goodness there's no company to-night," said Peter, as he pulled his chair out from the table after he had seated Janet.

"Righto," agreed English. "Much too hot for Dodo and Di this evening, but I suppose they'll be here later," and he started in to carve the chicken, while Phyllis mixed the salad dressing.

"No, they won't," laughed Janet. "Phyl and I have a plan for tonight that does not include the village of Old Chester."

"Three cheers!" replied Peter, fervently. "Not that I don't like Old Chester, and all its inhabitants, but I must say that a dinner just for four is the nicest yet."

Janet sighed gratefully.

"How nice to be so appreciated by one's husband!" she said, sentimentally.

"Hurry up, English, and say something nice like that so I can wax sentimental, too," demanded Phyllis.

English blushed. "Old Peter always gets ahead of me with the pretty speeches," he said, "but then there is such a perfect understanding between us, my love, that mere pretty speeches are quite unnecessary."

"Oh, Peter, he got you there," laughed Phyllis, and jumping up from her place at the table she went around to kiss the top of her husband's head.

It was a happy and a merry meal. The last dish was off the table, and the Twins had just started to wash them (for they never allowed the maids to come home to a sink full of dirty dishes, because as Janet said: "Just think how you'd feel in the same place!") when Peter, who had been smoking on the front porch, dashed into the kitchen, the picture of distress.

"Here come the Blakes," he announced tragically. "I see them down the hill and they are headed here."

"Little canoe trip, fare thee well," sighed English, but Janet took her hands from the dishwater and dried them hurriedly.

"Upstairs, all of you, or, better still, into the barn, then we shall be really out when they get here."

She led the way through the back door to the barn, and they slipped in behind the big door just as the Ford driven by the Blake girls came into sight.

It is no exaggeration to say that both girls drove the car and at the same time, for while one held the wheel, the other gave advice, and kept her hand on the emergency brake.

They came to a halt in front of the old-fashioned doorway and Alice Blake got out to bang the knocker. They waited in silence while the four conspirators held their breath.

"They are not home," they heard Alice call,

and her sister reply: "See if they are in the barn."

"Up in the hay with you, quick!" cried Peter, and they all scuttled up the ladder for dear life. Janet could not help wondering what Auntie Mogs and Nan would say when they heard about it, but Phyllis was only concerned with the tragedy if they were caught.

Alice poked her head in the door just as Peter pulled his foot up through the hole that led to the hayloft.

"Jan, are you here?" she called, but not receiving any reply, she went out and reported that there was no one about.

"Saved for the moment!" exclaimed English, as he heard the welcome sound of the departing motor. "Now for the canoes!"

It was a soft balmy night, and as they paddled toward the islands the stars came out one by one, while a yellow moon rose across the water.

"Peter," said Janet, quite seriously, "let's

paddle across the path of the moon, shall we? I mean straight across it."

Peter threw back his head and laughed.

"Rather you'd try it than I, Princess," he replied.

"Oh, I suppose you'll say it can't be done, but look at it: There's the golden pathway, we're in it, why can't we paddle hard to that point and then we'll be out of it?"

Peter paddled furiously and still they stayed in the same spot apparently. Peter was still laughing when Janet said crossly:

"All right, I see it now. You needn't try any more."

English and Phyllis in the other boat were having a heart-to-heart talk about the Twins' going away with Alice.

"Of course, I'll miss you," said English, "but I do that if you are out of my sight."

"Then I won't go," said Phyllis simply.

"Indeed you shall," returned English.

"Think how glad I shall be to leave here, to

have you meet me at some little station, and then the fun of the house-party!"

Phyllis drew a long sigh. "Then you really want me to go—I mean, you don't mind if I do."

English stopped paddling long enough to lean forward and possess himself of one of her hands.

"Go, by all means, dearest girl, but don't forget to miss me while you are there."

Phyllis chuckled. "There's not much fear of that, dearest of men," she said softly.

CHAPTER IX

CAMP HAPPY-GO-LUCKY

WELL, I must say this is not very attractive. I admit I'm disappointed—and where's the child?"

Alice stood in the center of the tiny platform and looked about her despairingly.

On every side were half-burned trees, and flat dusty roads. Across from the station was a miserable ramshackle house painted a dingy yellow.

"It *is* kind of desolate, isn't it?" agreed Phyllis, but Janet had her eyes on the mountains beyond.

"Just breathe the air and say it's not glorious, and look at the view. I'll climb that tall mountain tomorrow morning before breakfast."

Phyllis and Alice refused to be cheered.

They could see nothing but the half-burned trees and the dreary shack.

"What shall we do?" Alice demanded. "Mrs. Morley said Judy should be at the station to meet me and there's no sign of her."

"Lost in the north woods, but I say this air is wonderful," exclaimed Phyllis, and she sniffed appreciatively.

The last rays of the setting sun were giving the light by which they were forming their opinions, and the glorious country did look rather bleak.

"Let's see if anybody is awake in that house over there," suggested Alice. "Come with me, girls, I'm positively frightened."

"You won't find anybody there," Phyllis replied, laughing. "They've all died of jaundice by now, living in that house," but she followed Alice, who tapped gently on the rickety door.

Silence, followed by a louder tap.

A bushy head was thrust out of the window above.

"Who's there" called a man's voice.

"Have you a conveyance of any sort?" asked Alice, hopelessly.

"Con who?" demanded the man. "They don't live around here," and he shut the window with a bang.

Alice and Phyllis eyed each other forlornly. Janet was the only one who was enjoying herself.

"Kick him up again, and ask for a wagon," she suggested.

Phyllis was listening intently. "Here comes a car," she said, "maybe it's Judy."

"Never! Look at the way it's coming," said Alice.

A Ford buckboard was careening toward them, taking the bumps at a breath-taking speed. When its driver sighted the girls the horn began to toot loudly and the car rattled up to a sudden stop. A figure that looked like a boy's with its well-fitting knickerbockers and sweater, and short cropped head of hair appeared. But it was a girl, as her

voice, low and musical, proclaimed. She darted first to Alice.

"If this isn't the berries!" she exclaimed, shaking hands heartily. "I almost didn't make it, but the little car's the cat's, and here I am with one flat; but I've got a spare so that's that—and hello, you two! Am I seeing double, or are you twins?"

"Yes, we're twins," laughed Janet. "What are you going to do about your flat?"

"Oh, don't lose any sleep over that," replied Judy. "I'll wake up old Whiskers, and he can change it for us."

She banged at the door of the shack until Alice thought it would come down on her head. The window opened none too gently.

"G'wan away," shouted the man above them.

"Now, Paws, be nice. It's your old pal, Judy. Come down and help with this tire."

"Oh! hello, Judy." The answer was surprisingly gentle. "Why didn't you say it was you. I'll be right down."

"That's the way to talk," replied Judy.
"Make it snappy."

Alice looked at Phyllis in despair. She was thinking of Dodo and Di. They were slangy, in a Hilltop sort of way; but Judy—words failed her.

Janet was already helping with the tire rim, and she and Judy were talking like old friends.

"Jan seems to approve," said Phyllis, "so I guess I do, too."

The man whom Judy called "Paws" came out of the house, followed by another, the one alluded to as "Whiskers" from the looks of him.

"Howdy, boys. Let's see how snappy you can make it. I've kept these folks waiting long enough." Judy stepped back and shook hands heartily with both men.

"Wal now, Judy, it's real nice to see you 'round again, we sure miss you winters," said Paws, and Whiskers nodded.

Judy saw Alice's expression, and chuckled;

but she thought some explanation was due, so she gave it as they rolled away over the bumps.

"Those two," she called over her shoulder, "have known me since I was three years old. They are guides, and I'm terribly fond of them. So are my uncle and aunt."

There was a note of defiance in her voice and Alice was quick to detect it.

"You certainly have them well trained," she laughed. "They almost bit our heads off when we asked them if they had a conveyance of any kind."

Judy burst out laughing. "Did you ask Whiskers that? How rich and rare! What did he say?"

"Told us no such family lived around these parts," Janet explained.

The laughter that followed helped to tide over the difference between the girls, but in her heart of hearts Judy had decided that the three were too straight-laced for her, while the three had decided that she was too slangy

to be really clever. So, with a tiny feeling of antagonism, they rode through the woods over the bumpy roads.

For miles they went and always at a break-neck speed.

"Judy, child, surely we'll land in a ditch if you don't go more carefully," protested Alice.

"Only way to take these bumps," Judy replied. "If I go slow we're stuck here for the night. Believe me, I know what I'm talking about. These are some roads in the daytime, but at night they are the very end of the limit."

"That's right, Alice, it's like Arizona after a rain—if you don't travel you're stuck." Phyllis while saying this was wishing she were at the wheel instead of this fourteen-year-old sprite, who did not look very strong at best; but she had to admit that the girl was making a good job of driving.

"This is our gate," said Judy, as they drove under an arch of logs, "and I suppose I should say 'Welcome to Happy-Go-Lucky Lodge'."

She did not sound as though she meant the welcome very heartily and the three girls felt suddenly guilty.

An old man came toward them, waving a lantern, and in the uncertain flicker Judy saw at once that something was wrong.

"Seven puppies in the barn, Miss Judy," he called before the car had stopped.

"How is Juno?" demanded Judy, coming to a sudden halt.

"She—she's dead, Miss Judy," the old man replied.

Without a word, Judy jumped from the car and ran off behind the dark shadow of a house. It was pitch-black by now and only an occasional star showed in the sky.

"Come along with me, please, folks," the old man said as he led the way along a trim path. "Miss Judy's upset, but she'll be back soon."

They followed him into a low-built log-cabin that turned out to be one immense room filled with comfortable wicker furniture

painted apple-green, and cushioned with gay chintz. Three lamps hung low over tables, the center one burning; but for the most part the room was in shadow. Deer-skin rugs lay on the floor, deer heads, and mounted fish hung on the wall.

"Oh, what a lovely room!" exclaimed Alice.

"I never saw anything so comfy in all my life!" cried Phyllis, sinking down in one of the big chairs.

The old man stood at the door, shifting from one foot to the other.

"Excuse me, please, folks," he said at last, "but I'll be going to Miss Judy."

"I'm coming, too," said Janet, and without a word she followed him through the darkness to where a faint light shone in the doorway of the barn.

They found Judy on her knees beside a huge Great Dane and the tears were running down her cheeks. Janet said nothing for a minute, then she went over and touched the great beast. The dog was warm.

"She's not dead!" Janet exclaimed. "Let's get to work."

She said this at exactly a quarter past eight. At half-past nine, after hot applications and medicine had been administered, they were rewarded by a limp wagging of the dog's tail.

"Gee, but you're a wonder!" Judy exclaimed. "How can I ever thank you? I wish we could be friends, but I know you don't approve of me."

"Don't be silly," retorted Janet. "I think you're a peach, but I do wish if you must use slang you would try and be more original. That's what the others think, too. 'The cat's' and 'the berries' are so trite. Do forget them and say what you really mean."

Judy sat back on her heels and looked at Janet. "I never thought of it that way before," she said, "but I like slang, and I won't be straight-laced for anybody."

Janet laughed softly. "Wait until you meet the crowd of girls that are coming up here this summer and see what you say then,"

she said, "and now come on, let's see how we can feed the puppies."

"Babies' bottles," suggested Judy.

"Not yet," explained Janet, "soft rags dipped in milk as a starter."

"You are some vet," laughed Judy, and went off to get the milk.

Hours later when Janet crawled into bed beside Phyllis in one of the guest cottages Phyllis said drowsily:

"What is Judy really like?"

And Janet replied: "She's a peach."

"Oh, but, Jan, she's tiresomely slangy."

"I know, but just now she thinks that's clever. Wait until she meets Dodo and Di. It won't be they who imitate her but she who will imitate them."

"That will cheer Alice up," said Phyllis.

CHAPTER X

JUDY

A MISTY morning, forerunner of a glorious day, greeted the visitors at Happy-Go-Lucky Lodge the next morning. A red sun peeped between the mountains, and mirrored itself in the shining waters of the lake.

A deep, insistent drone insinuated itself into the consciousness of the Twins, and made them dream of airplanes. Janet was the first to open her eyes. She sat up in bed and listened.

"Phyl, wake up, there's a plane somewhere in the neighborhood. I can hear it."

A knock sounded at the door as Phyllis opened sleepy eyes.

"Come in," called Janet.

A thin, wiry little woman, without an

ounce of extra flesh, entered, carrying an armful of wood.

"Morning, girls," she said, cheerfully. "You've brought us a nice day. I'll make your fire for you this morning, but after this you'll have to make it yourself."

There was nothing ungracious in her words, just a statement of fact that somehow seemed to be a jolly one.

Phyllis jumped out of bed.

"We'll make it this morning," she laughed as she opened the door of the iron stove in one corner of the room.

"Well, now, I like that," ejaculated the little woman. "I kinda thought coming from the city you'd be helpless, but I see you're regular girls."

Phyllis had the fire going brightly—that is, the paper under the wood—but her triumph was short-lived. The blaze died down and out it went.

"Let me," laughed Janet. "Phyl, dear, you never could make a fire," and with a re-

adjustment of the wood Janet had a real fire going in a minute.

Mrs. Handson, for that was the little woman's name, so she told them, looked them over carefully before she spoke again.

"Sakes alive," she said, at last, "you're as like as two peas. Miss Nat said I could easily tell the one that saved Juno last night, but blessed if I can."

The Twins were used to being told that they were as alike as two peas, and they only smiled.

"Is that an airship I hear?" asked Janet.

"Yes, it is, and Miss Judy's in it. I hoped the dogs would keep her on shore for a while, but Archie Lang came over early this morning and off they went as usual."

"Ye gods!" exclaimed Phyllis. "Wait until Alice hears that her charge is up in a plane before breakfast, she'll have a fit."

"Hope this youth will take me up, too," laughed Janet.

"Jan, you never would," begged Phyllis.

"Of course, I shall," said Janet quietly. "Peter wouldn't mind a bit. He's crazy to go up in one again himself."

"Well, I shall die of fright," said Phyllis, calmly.

Mrs. Handson grinned. "I see you're not alike, for all your looks. One's got sense and the other's got daring, and the two never did go together."

"Oh, come, now," laughed Janet, "how about Lindbergh? He had sense and daring, too."

Mrs. Handson was not outwitted.

"Well, he was the exception that broke every rule, like the hero that he is," she said.

Janet was just going to say something about her favorite hero when Alice, fully dressed, burst into the room.

"Girls, what under the sun shall I do? Judy is up in a plane, and they are doing all kinds of stunts. I'm terrified."

"Don't you be alarmed," Mrs. Handson said quietly. "Her auntie lets her go up

when she's here, and Mr. Archie won't let her come to no harm."

"Yes, I suppose so," sighed Alice. "I can't manage her, that's certain, so I may as well let her go her own way, but if I had had any idea what a terror she was I'd given up the camp. Last night the way she drove that car was bad enough."

"Just leave her alone, and she'll take care of herself," was Mrs. Handson's advice as she closed the door and left them to finish their dressing.

At breakfast there was no sign of Judy until the flapjacks came on, then she appeared as if by magic. She was followed by a tall, lanky youth with a firm jaw and piercing blue eyes.

"Hello, everybody and Janet," she said. "This is Archie Lang, owner of the 'Loon,' though he's not one himself; but a shy young man with a mania for aviation."

"Come in, Mr. Lang, and have some breakfast," Alice invited, cordially.

"Thanks," said Archie, "I could do with a flapjack or two."

"Banana oil," laughed Judy. "You never ate less than ten in your weakest moment."

"Oh, dry up, Judy," said Archie, plainly ruffled.

"These," said Judy, no whit discouraged, "are the Twins I was telling you about. Can you pick out the one that was such a good sport last night, and helped me with Juno?"

The Twins assumed the same expression and smiled provokingly at Archie.

"No, I can't, and I bet you you can't either," he replied.

"Will you let me take up the 'Loon' alone if I do" demanded Judy.

Alice stopped pouring her maple syrup. "Never!" she exclaimed. "I am sure your aunt would back me up on that point. Go with Archie, if you must, but alone—*no*. That is, unless you want to send me home on a stretcher."

She put her hand over Judy's little brown

fist; something of the charm that was Alice's made itself felt for the first time, and in spite of herself Judy smiled.

"That's right, Mrs.—?" Archie stopped and blushed.

"Westlake," supplied Alice.

"Mrs. Westlake," Archie went on, "there's nothing doing; Judy, I've told you so a million times. You can't take the 'Loon' up alone."

Judy did not sulk, she smiled brightly.

"Will some day," she teased. "But you haven't guessed the Twins," she reminded him.

"Oh, I give up without a struggle," said Archie. "They've got me buffaloed at the start."

Judy looked confidently at Phyllis. "You helped me with Juno last night," she said, and smiled.

The Twins laughed heartily.

"Wrong guess," said Janet, and turning to Archie Lang, she added: "Will you take

me up in your plane after breakfast, Mr. Lang?"

"I'll never get you mixed up again," declared Judy. "I'll just ask you to go for a ride in the 'Loon' and the one that accepts I'll know is Janet."

Phyllis turned, with a peculiar smile, to Archie.

"Will you take me up, too, Mr. Lang?" she asked, a plan already forming in her mind.

"Yes, to both of you," laughed Archie, forgetting his embarrassment. "Aren't you coming, too, Mrs. Westlake?"

"Perhaps, if you promise not to drop me out if I scream for help halfway up," Alice agreed.

Breakfast over, they went out to the lake-shore to inspect the seaplane, a navy model, as the girls could see from its pontoons—with two cockpits and seats one back of the other. It was riding at anchor and did not look very terrifying.

"Come along, Miss Twin that took care of Juno, and I'll show you how easy it is."

Janet was delighted and before Alice and Phyllis could enter their protests, she was taxiing off across the lake. They watched her rise swiftly and circle up above the trees and then go out of sight.

It was an endless wait before she got back, and Phyllis was plainly nervous, but before too long they saw the plane over the tip of the nearest mountain and it came gliding toward them. Archie made a perfect landing, and Janet was all smiles.

"It's wonderful, Phyl, your turn next," she said.

Phyllis exchanged a meaning wink with her twin and they walked off a few steps, arm in arm. When they came back one of them stepped gingerly into the plane and the other smiled to herself to watch her.

"Come on, Jan," said Judy, "let's go and see the puppies."

The twin that was left on land nodded and

they went off with Alice toward the barn after the plane had dipped from sight.

Juno, the Great Dane that Janet had saved from certain death the night before, wagged her tail gratefully, but did not make the fuss Judy had expected. The puppies were adorable, and the three girls did not go out on the landing pier or they might have heard the following conversation:

"Thanks ever so much," said the twin who got out of the 'Loon' and waited for Archie to follow her.

"Just a shake," said Archie, staring at her hard. "There's something queer about this. You did exactly what your twin did when we passed the mountain and first got the view. I turned around to watch you."

"Of course. We're twins, we always do everything alike."

Archie stared harder, then he laughed an abrupt little chuckle.

"I'm on," he said. "You just changed places, and the way I know is you are wear-

ing a wrist-watch and your twin isn't At least, I don't think she is."

"Oh, dear," sighed Janet, "these observing air pilots, and their hawk-like eyes! You're right, but don't tell Judy."

"No," agreed Archie, "it will be more fun to let her find it out for herself."

CHAPTER XI

AN ACCIDENT

FOR the rest of the day Alice and the Twins looked around for something to do in the way of settling the camp, but they found it was in perfect readiness to receive any number of guests. At dinner-time they came to the conclusion that there was no need of waiting the three or four days before sending for the rest.

"They may as well come right away," said Phyllis, "the sooner the better."

"That's what I think," Alice agreed. "I'll wire them tonight."

"Don't forget to get straw for the boys' cabins," reminded Judy.

She was speaking of the row of open huts facing the lake that were to be occupied by the boys. These were made of logs, and had

a hearthstone in front for each fire. Inside a big bunk ran alongside the wall, to be piled high with straw in place of a mattress.

"The boys will love it—that is, all except Jimmy, who will cry for a bed," said Janet.

"And Lorry will be miserable until he gets one," laughed Alice.

"Oh, there are loads of camp cots in the barn," said Judy, wondering what kind of a boy would object to camping out.

"But Jimmy must learn to rough it," laughed Phyllis. "He's too cityfied entirely, and it will do him a world of good."

The rest of the dinner was taken up with a discussion of the coming house-party, so that it was well after eight o'clock before Janet and Judy went out to the barn to see the puppies and Juno. After they settled them comfortably for the night, Judy turned to Janet.

"Jan," she said—for she had adopted her nickname, although she still continued to call the other twin "Phyllis" and Alice "Mrs. Westlake" (Judy's heart was a curious one,

something like a guarded fortress, and it was hard to force your way into it; once in, however, it belonged to you). "Jan," she repeated, "will all these girls disapprove of me like your twin and Mrs. Westlake?"

There was a forlorn note in her voice, and Janet was quick to catch it. She put down the puppy she was fondling, and let her hand fall lightly on Judy's shoulder.

"Judy, you're crazy," she said. "Neither Alice nor Phyl disapproves of you. They simply don't understand why a girl of your intelligence should use such atrocious slang; and Alice is scared to death that Dodo and Di will pick it up. It isn't as though we, any of us, cared a blame about slang one way or the other, but the 'bee's knees' and 'banana oil' and 'prune,' and so forth are so deadly trite and uninteresting. If you must enlarge your vocabulary, do be original."

Judy hung her head and did not reply, so Janet went on:

"Just give these girls that are coming a



“Jan, will all these girls disapprove of me like your twin
and Mrs. Westlake?”

chance to like you. Don't suffocate them with expressions before they have a chance to know the real *you*. You'll love them, every one of them. Why, I prophesy you and Sally will be the best of pals in five minutes, see if you aren't."

"But, Jan, I like slang. I think it's funny, and I particularly like 'the cat's', I think it's expressive." Judy almost wept.

Janet laughed.

"So do I like slang, and I agree with you that there are occasions when 'the cat's' is just the thing to say. The occasion might arise about once a week, and then it would be rather funny; but, Judy, with you everything is 'the cat's'; it grows monotonous after a while, and loses its charm. We don't want you to stop using slang altogether, but we want you to use English now and then."

Judy stood with her back to the grain box and faced Janet, who was still patting the puppies.

"Jan, I've never let anyone talk to me like

this before, and I don't think I like it," Judy protested. "If I give up slang, Archie and the Mettam boys will think I'm a prude."

Janet shook her head slowly, and then got up from her place beside Juno.

"Use all the slang you want to, dear child, but watch out. It's just possible that Archie will prefer Dodo and Di or Debby and Lorry when they get here. Only time, and seeing that it doesn't pay, will cure you of this stupid habit, because you are delightfully stubborn. Now, cheer up; let's go back to the cabin and see what's up. Don't think any more about what I've said, just be natural," and saying this she slipped her arm around Judy's waist, so that together they went into the house.

A few minutes later they heard a commotion on the shore of the lake, and the chugging of a motor-boat, mingled with cries and shouts.

"Whatever can it be?" demanded Alice, as they trooped out and down to the lake.

The main building of the group of cabins was up the hill, about fifty feet from the water.

Pine trees fringed the edge of the lake, and hid it from view until they came fully upon it. They saw lanterns, and one searchlight from a car across from them. The motor-boat was making toward their landing, but before it got there it turned around, to head for the end of the lake.

Something black hummed above them uncertainly and then followed a splash in the water about one hundred feet away.

It was maddening.

"Hi, there, Archie!" called Judy at the top of her lungs.

An answering "Hello" came from the motorboat.

"Nothing wrong with Archie, anyway," said Janet.

Judy turned back toward the house.

"I'm going for the car and turn the searchlight on them," she said.

The others waited, trying to make some sort of sense out of the calls and yells that came to them. In a very few minutes they saw the

car coming toward them at full speed, across the grass from the road, and slamming its way between trees as it came; then in one breathtaking minute it had reached the shore but did not stop.

With a startled scream, the three watchers saw it bound into the lake and sink with a sickening gurgle. Phyllis and Alice lost their heads completely and stood wringing their hands and calling for help.

Janet dived for the boat-house, where a little earlier in the day she had seen a megaphone. She found it and raised it to her lips and tried to call, but no word came. With a mighty effort she at last got control of her voice and its volume surprised her.

"Help!" she called over and over, and added to the unseen listeners. "Judy's drowning!"

After that things began to happen. The motor-boat arrived, and Archie was on the landing before it had stopped. He was followed by a younger girl and an older man.

"She's pinned down there under the car,"

cried Janet, and without a word Archie tore off his coat and kicked off his shoes and dived into the water.

Handson and his wife arrived with lanterns, and Mrs. Handson was trying to jump into the black water, while her husband held her back.

Seconds passed, and then the older man, who was Archie's father, surprised everybody by jumping in, too. In less time than it takes to tell it, he and his son appeared above the water without Judy.

Janet made up her mind. She heard Archie say: "It's so black down there," and she jumped in. It *was* black under the water, but Janet knew the dark, and she knew how to swim. She began to feel around as soon as she struck the water and at last, after what seemed interminable hours, she felt Judy, but her strength was not equal to the task of lifting her. If she went up again, she might never find her. She clutched hold of the limp form and then kicked with all her might. Every-

thing grew black and she lost consciousness.

Archie found her and Judy, too, and with the aid of his father he brought them to the surface.

Janet came to first and heard Phyl calling to her from what seemed a long, long way off, but as memory flooded back she remembered Judy. She felt very sick, but she wanted them to stop working on her now that she was conscious.

"I'm all right," she said.

Phyllis, who was all efficiency now that there was need of her, quickly turned from Janet with hardly a word and helped with Judy.

At last they were rewarded with a flicker of the eyelash and a little gasp, and they knew that their work was over. Phyllis administered a hot drink and then for the first time they all looked at each other.

"Phew," said Archie's father, "this is the most disagreeable thing I have ever had happen to me."

"Quite," said Alice, and she laughed hysterically.

"And I quarreled with Judy yesterday," said the freckled, snub-nosed girl, who curiously enough was the handsome Archie's sister.

Phyllis said nothing, she just went over to hold Janet's hand.

"Oh, you couldn't kill Judy," Archie declared. "It's wonderful the way your twin found her, and hung on to her," he added.

"It's the cat's," came a weak whisper, and to those listening they were the most beautiful words that they had ever heard.

CHAPTER XII

DEAR TWINS

NOW tell us what all the fuss was about at the other end of the lake," demanded Phyllis, when she and Alice had packed Judy and Janet off to bed, and had ensconced Mr. Lang and his daughter Jane in comfortable chairs before the fire—Archie had gone home to change his clothes.

"Oh," said Mr. Lang, "I had almost forgotten that in Judy's peril. A man from the next lake was out in his plane and he ran out of gas just here and landed in the lake. He didn't have sense enough to ship his engines and so his plane sank."

Jane laughed unexpectedly.

"He may be in the lake now, for all we know, unless the guides hauled him out. Arch had him half in the boat when he heard you

calling and he let him right back into the water again."

"Oh, come, daughter, it wasn't quite as bad as that," Mr. Lang protested.

"Well," Jane continued to chuckle, "we started out to call on you, and here we are. Mother told me to tell you, Mrs. Westlake, that she'd be over in daylight. Mother can't bear the lake at night."

"We'll be delighted to see her at any time," Alice said, cordially.

It was Phyllis who first heard Archie returning. His tennis shoes made a soft pad-pad on the path that led up from the lake.

"Jane," he said, coming in and hardly noticing the rest, "the Mettams are here! Go and see if Judy's awake, and tell her they have brought a speed-boat with them. It's on the siding and—oh, wait a minute," as Jane started for Judy's cabin, "a lot of those surf boats as well. Now, if we could only get some young people, we'd be all set for a wonderful summer."

"Which reminds me," said Alice, "I wanted to send a telegram tonight."

"Too late. The station agent goes home after the last train, and nothing can get him out of bed, but I'll take you over in the motor-boat as far as the landing, and you can walk from there. It's the best we can do, as our car is laid up and Judy's is taking a swim."

Archie looked at Phyllis as he spoke, wondering which twin she was. He thought it must have been Janet that rescued Judy—in fact, he had heard them call her "Janet," but blessed if he did not think this girl sitting before the fire was the same one he had taken up with him in his plane. He decided to settle the question.

"Have you and I a secret, Miss Twin?" he demanded.

Phyllis looked up, surprised. She did not have her wits about her or she would have teased him a little, but she was thinking of Janet, so she said, wonderingly: "Have we?"

"No, it's your twin," said Archie, still

puzzled, for he could not remember whether it was Janet or Phyllis he had had up with him in the morning, but he thought he remembered hearing them call her "Janet."

"I wish you and your twin would wear some distinguishing mark, so that I and only I could tell you apart. It will be fun teasing the others, but I'd like to keep you straight myself."

Archie really sounded worried and Phyllis laughed.

"I'll speak to Jan about it and see if we can't devise something," she said, "but usually we just wait until people know us and then they discover marks for themselves."

"It would be interesting to know just what those marks are," said Mr. Lang. "I got only a glimpse of your twin, but I can't see any difference."

Alice laughed, and Mr. Lang turned to her.

"Can you tell them apart?" he inquired.

"Oh, yes," said Alice. "Their eyes are not a bit alike, neither are their hands. Phyl's

hair grows a tiny bit differently and, oh, well, there are hundreds of ways, but the best is to learn that Janet is Janet and Phyl is Phyl."

"Yes, I suppose so," agreed Archie. "Say," he went on, "are you going to ask any young people up this summer, Mrs. Westlake?"

"Wait and see," was all Alice would say, and he had to be content with that.

The Langs went home about ten-thirty, delighted with their new neighbors, and Alice and Phyllis went straight to bed. The air had made them very sleepy and they had had a hard time to suppress their yawns while their guests were there.

Early the next morning Archie was as good as his word, for the motor-boat was at the dock waiting for them before they were up.

It was a deceptive morning. The sun shone brilliantly and the mountains that surrounded them stood out in sharp silhouette against a deep blue sky.

Archie stayed to breakfast, and it spoke

well for him that no one seemed surprised or displeased at his arrival.

After a leisurely meal they all went down to the motor-boat and crowded in. Judy was as well as ever, though she looked a trifle pale and she gazed solemnly at the place from which she had been rescued, then she went over to Janet and put her arms around her as if to say: "I've adopted you as my twin."

Jane, on the other hand, was sitting close to Phyllis and her good-natured, homely little face was wreathed in smiles.

"Who's coming after we send the telegram? Go on, tell a fellow, won't you?" begged Archie.

"Oh, I know," said Judy, "it's Alice's family."

She did not speak very enthusiastically, for she had never paid much attention when Alice spoke of her girls. She had decided in her mind that they were a lot of goody-goodies, who never used slang, and she was sure Archie would hate them. Still, out of four girls near

her own age, maybe one of them would be nice.

They reached the landing and started off along the trail that led to the station. Alice sent her telegrams and was very mysterious about them. One went to Helen and said:

“Everything ready for your arrival. Try and bring all my family and don’t lose any of them.”

One went to Mr. Westlake and said about the same thing, while another went to Auntie Mogs and Nan, which read:

“Will you see that my family get off all right and wire me when they start? See that they bring all of their warm clothes. Wish you were coming too.”

On the way home the sky began to grow dark, and before they had reached the landing rain was falling, while angry waves beat against the shore of the lake.

“Now, what shall we do?” demanded Alice.

"I refuse to let Judy be drowned today after all the trouble we went to to save her last night."

Judy laughed and for the first time she decided that she could like Alice, after all, and that if she approved of a person she might be rather good fun. This was so foreign to what most people thought of Alice that had the Twins heard it they would have laughed heartily.

"I knew it would do something like this," said Jane, crossly. "It was much too smiling this morning."

"Then why didn't you say something about it?" Archie inquired, with brotherly frankness.

"What's the use of being a wet blanket?" defended Jane.

"Well, there are some slickers under the seats," said Archie, "and we're not far from the landing now."

"Oh, Arch, what a memory!" teased Judy. "Jane and I took them up to the boat-house the other day at your express command."

"Oh, the deuce!" exclaimed Archie. "What did you do it for?"

"Well, I like that," Jane declared, "after you told us to!"

"Well, you ought to have had sense enough to put them back," returned Archie, crossly.

Suddenly the rain came down in torrents and they were all drenched to the skin. The water hissed and spat at them, and they walked forlornly after Archie.

"If we could only get Judy and Janet home," bemoaned Alice, "the rest of us don't matter, but they are sure to take cold after their drenching last night."

They walked on in depressed silence, all a little worried and decidedly damp.

"There's a hut," called Janet, with an attempt at cheeriness.

"Look out," called Archie, and only just in time, for a big, black dog sprang at them from behind a tree. It was fortunately tied to a trolley and could only go so far, but that was enough to guard the entrance to the cabin.

Judy and Janet did their best to try and make friends, but in vain. The dog refused to let them pass.

"We've got to get in that hut," said Phyllis. "Jan, think of a way."

"I have it," said Archie. "I'll attract the dog's attention over here and you slip in one at a time."

He whistled the dog down to one end of the trolley, and Judy slipped in the door of the cabin. They followed her one by one. The dog was growing angrier and angrier, but he did not have sense enough to stay still. He almost caught Jane as she made a dart toward the door. Finally they were all inside except Archie.

"Here's where I take my life in my hands," he declared.

He picked up a big stone and threw it, the dog bounded after it and Archie dashed inside just in time.

They were all congratulating themselves on their cleverness when Jane said suddenly:

“Yes, we’re in, but how are we going to get out?”

They looked at the door and there was the black dog lying with his teeth bared across the opening.

“Oh,” groaned Phyllis, “see, the sun is coming out.”

It was true. The clouds had parted and a dazzling sun was shining through. They waited and they waited, but there was no let-up in the watchfulness of the dog and no sign of the campers who occupied the cabin. The hours dragged by and they played games. It rained again and cleared again, and still they were held prisoners.

“Oh, this is the limit,” protested Jane. “Will Mother be frightened, do you think, Arch?”

“No,” replied her brother. “I told her we’d probably spend the day at Judy’s.”

Alice smiled at his confidence and asked idly. “What’s behind that deerskin, I wonder?”

Archie lifted a heavy pelt from its place on the wall and they discovered a window nailed down tight. It was not a glass one, just a sliding panel, and it was fastened securely.

"I'll soon have that open," said Archie, and he found a hammer on the ledge that ran around two sides of the room.

"I think we ought to write and tell the owner that we were only sheltering from the storm and all about it," said Phyllis.

"Well, there's some writing paper over there, and a Corona typewriter with something in it. Do we dare take it out?" asked Janet.

Phyllis went over to the camp table and looked idly down at what was written on the page. She did not mean to read it, but the words seemed to jump off the paper at her.

"Dear Twins:

"You see I——"

and that was all.

"After all, we are not the only twins in the

world," laughed Janet when the rest had read it too.

"Write him a letter and sign it 'The Twins,' " suggested Alice, so Phyllis wrote:

"Dear Unknown Sir:

"Your dog is much too hospitable. After letting us in, not without a ruse on our part, he refuses to let us out, so we are forced to open the window to escape after four hours.

"We are very regretful about the damage, but after all, a window should be open, and you can nail it up again without too much trouble.

(Signed) "THE TWINS."

By the time the letter was written, Archie had opened the window; with a feeling of guilt they all climbed out, and hurried off as though they were afraid of being caught.

The last thing they heard as they ran to the landing was the dismal howling of the big black dog, who felt somehow that he had not done his duty.

CHAPTER XIII

THEY COME

JUNO lay in the sunshine and watched the pups with a prideful eye. Out on the water lay the graceful "Loon" and Archie lazed on the beach waiting for the Mettam boys to come ashore. They were creating the only disturbance of this peaceful afternoon. In a high-powered motor-boat they were dashing up and down the deep lake, sending rainbow jets of water into the air, making an infernal racket.

It was Tuesday, and the day Alice's family were to arrive. Judy was in two minds about meeting them. She wanted to go out in the Mettam's boat, but in her heart she knew that would seem ungracious. Alice settled the point for her.

"Oh, Judy," she said after lunch was over,

"you'll be somewhere about this evening when we get in, won't you?"

Judy sighed with relief, and a tiny bit of disappointment.

"Why, yes, Mrs. Westlake, I'll come with you, if you like," she said, diffidently.

"Not the least need of it in the world, dear child," returned Alice. "I heard Charlie Mettam ask you to go out in his boat after supper, and I know you'd like to. You'll see plenty of the girls all summer, and there really isn't room in the wagon for any more. As it is, we may have to make two loads."

"Thanks," said Judy, rather shamefacedly, "I do want to go out in the Mettams' boat. I'm to be the first one, you know. They are tuning up the engine now and tonight it will be all ready."

"But you won't stay out after dark, will you?" Alice asked rather than commanded, fearful of consequences.

"Oh, no, the Mettams have to be in at eight. Say, Mrs. Westlake, do you mind very much

if I ask Jane to be here, too, when your family arrive?"

Alice knew at once that the girl before her was dreading the arrival of "the family," and she smiled a little smile to herself.

"Why not have them all here?" she asked. "You may as well meet tonight as tomorrow. Ask them to stay, and we'll have a little supper when we get back. I'll make the Twins fix sandwiches."

"Oh, I'll help," exclaimed Judy. "Oh, dear," she added, "I do wish I hadn't drowned the car. It's awful to think of your meeting your family in a farm-wagon. Aunt and Uncle would have fits."

"But the girls will adore it. They'd much rather arrive in a wagon at camp than in a car, so don't worry about that."

Janet and Phyllis, appealed to, agreed, and they all set to work making sandwiches. Alice did not like to leave Judy on the lake, but Mrs. Handson assured her that nothing could happen to her in the water.

“Of course, I’m not saying something didn’t happen to her in the water, but the poor child was caught, and couldn’t get out of the car; but give her her legs and no one can beat her swimming; besides she’s got the sight of an owl. Don’t worry about her, Mrs. Westlake, I’ll have my eyes on her all the time, though she’ll never know it.”

At five o’clock the Twins and Alice started off in the farm-wagon, Handson driving, and Janet beside him. It was not long before she had the reins, and was deep in horse talk with the old guide, who, to be strictly honest, did not know one-quarter as much as she did on the subject.

The station still looked forlorn in the setting sun, but the glory of the mountains was in their hearts, and made them feel very differently this time when they saw it.

The train pulled in, and Helen, holding tight to Sonya and Hester, got off, followed by Debby and Lorry and Dodo and Di. It was not until they were on the platform and

the train had started again that Alice realized her husband, Frank Westlake, was not among them.

"Where's your father?" she asked Debby.

"Oh, Mother, he was on the forward car and he's just forgotten to get out!" Debby replied.

Alice flew into the station and had the station-master hurry a wire to the next stop, telling Mr. Westlake to wait until somebody came for him, and not to leave the station.

"Now, Twins, you must take the girls home and I'll have to find a car to take me to Upper St. Claire."

"Oh, Alice, I'm so sorry," Helen said earnestly. "I thought Mr. Westlake knew we were coming to our place, but I ought to have made sure."

"Nonsense," said Lorry, "it's my fault. I'm the eldest, but I was so excited at the thought of seeing Mother and everybody that I never gave Father a thought."

Alice laughed. "Why, to hear you re-

proaching yourselves, you'd think I was not happy at the idea of having Frank all to myself on a nice long ride in the moonlight. Hop into the wagon and go back to camp with free consciences. I'm delighted your father forgot to get out. The station-master is finding me a car somewhere."

Janet drove back through the deep woods and they caught some of her enthusiasm.

"Tell us about Judy," said Dodo, or rather she shouted it from her place at the end of the wagon.

"Wait and see," Janet teased.

"I've got a new red bathing suit," announced Sonya.

"I didn't bring my doll, I knew we wouldn't have time for dolls," Hester announced.

Phyllis stopped long enough in her questions about English to kiss them both.

Camp Happy-Go-Lucky was ablaze with lights, and the radio was going when they drove up. As the wagon made little or no noise on the grass, Phyllis had opened the

door before the five occupants of the room knew of their arrival.

Judy jumped up from her place by the sofa.

"How do you do?" she said primly, holding out her hand to one and all.

"Hello, are you Judy?" Dodo shook it warmly, and turned to Di. "She's more like you said, Di, you win," and she laughed and turned back to Judy. "Di bet you'd be formal and I bet you wouldn't," she said, "but you are."

Judy looked at her for a full minute and the rest watched. It was an interesting picture, these two handsome girls taking stock of each other.

Then Judy gave a bubbling little laugh. "Oh, but I'm not really, you see," she said. "I thought you would be, and here you've been wondering the same thing about me. Isn't that the cat's, though?"

The others were introduced and the boys forgot to be shy, all but Tony Mettam, who sat in a corner and stared at the beautiful

Lorry as though his eyes were coming out of their sockets. The Mettams were nice boys. Charlie was sixteen, Frank and Tony fifteen and thirteen respectively. They thought the girls were a happy solution for their summer fun, but they rather wished they had been boys.

Judy introduced her guests all around, and Jane and Di went off in a corner to talk about swimming. The four were good friends from the start and it promised to be a happy summer.

Alice and Mr. Westlake came in about ten o'clock, the latter not at all disturbed, but looking at Alice with devoted eyes. He had his butterfly net with him.

After the guests had gone, Alice turned to her family.

"Well, girls," she said, "is it going to be a good summer?"

"The best ever," said Dodo and Di, while Debby and Lorry echoed them heartily.

CHAPTER XIV

✓ ARCHIE AND DEBBY

THE next morning the Mettams were over early and Archie and Jane followed. It was curious the difference in Archie over night. Gone was the tennis shirt open at the throat, and in its place he wore a soft collar and a bow tie. His trousers had been pressed, and his hair was slicked back.

"You mustn't expect me to play around with you kids all summer," he said, coming over in the motor-boat, to the observant Jane.

Jane confided her news to Judy at the first opportunity.

"Arch is going to be very starchy for the next few days," she said.

They were sitting on the roof of the boat-house, a low structure with a broad shelf running around three sides of it.

Judy looked at Archie, who was sauntering across the lawn to where Lorry sat with the Twins and Helen.

"That's because she's older, and, oh, so beautiful; but I think it's mean of Arch. After all, we've been pals for years—ever since we were kids—and now. . . ." Angry tears filled Judy's eyes, and she brushed them away impatiently.

"Yes," said Jane, reflectively, "and now he thinks we are kids; and look at the Mettam boys getting ready to take Dodo and Di out in their speed-boat . . . and, oh, look, Judy, Charlie is helping Dodo on with her slicker!"

It was Di who noticed the two girls above them as they went to get into the boat.

"Hey, there, you're coming, too," she called. "I've been wondering where you were. Come on down."

"Yes, come on, Judy," called Charlie.

"You too, Jane," called Frank.

Judy and Jane exchanged glances.

"No use sulking," said the sensible Jane.

"They are awfully nice," admitted Judy, and together they joined the others.

Archie meanwhile was doing his best to be very gallant to Lorry, and she was treating him with her usual Spartan indifference.

"Would you care to go up in my plane?" he asked her as he twiddled with his tie and looked embarrassed.

"No," said Lorry in her downright way, "I wouldn't. I'm crazy to go up in a plane some day, but I must have a more experienced pilot."

"Oh, come, Lorry, that's unkind!" exclaimed Janet. "After all, Lindbergh was only twenty-five when he crossed the ocean, and Archie is eighteen and a wonderful pilot. He took me up twice, and I am hoping he will ask me to go again."

Archie was blushing furiously. Lorry had not intended to be ungracious, and she turned to him with a little smile.

"Sorry, Archie, but I thought you were

about sixteen," she said, thereby making it much worse.

The others laughed, and Debby said diplomatically: "Will you take me up, Mr. Lang?"

Archie went to taxi his plane across the lake, and the girls turned to Lorry.

"Lorry, I wonder that even Jimmy likes you when you can talk like that," said Helen, crossly. "You really hurt the poor boy's feelings."

"Why didn't you say you thought he looked twenty?" demanded Phyllis.

Lorry looked at them in amazement. "Because I really did and do think he looks about sixteen," she said.

"Well," sighed Debby, "I go to my probable death just to save your face. I hope you are good and sorry."

Lorry jumped up. "No, you don't," she said, "I'm going myself," and off she went.

Archie was overjoyed to see her, but he made up his mind that he would take Debby

up just as soon as he brought Lorry back. This was sooner than he had expected, for Lorry was desperately seasick, because the air was a little bumpy; she came down with all of her Spartan dignity gone and a very woe-begone expression on her pretty face.

Debby got into the boat that was to take her out to the plane in an agony of spirit. If Lorry, the Spartan, was ill, what could she expect but a like fate? The girls watched her circle above the tops of the trees, and then, much to their surprise, saw the plane straighten out and go off in the direction of the mountain near by.

"Oh," said Lorry, apprehensively, "I do hope she doesn't go out of sight."

But she did, and it was not until half an hour later that they heard from her. Then Alice was called to the telephone. She went in fear and trembling that she would hear some very serious news, but instead Debby's laughing voice came over the wire.

"Hello, Mother, is that you?" she asked.

"Yes, are you safe, darling?" demanded Alice.

"Why, yes, of course. We had the most gorgeous ride and now we're on Lake St. Claire; and, oh, Mother, Archie wants me to stay and have lunch with him. Please say I may." Debby's voice fairly begged over the telephone.

Alice's first thought and inclination was to say: "No, come straight home," but she always went on the theory that second thoughts were best, so she held her breath, counted five and remembered that it was a new generation, and that at least Debby had called up to ask permission. Then she said slowly:

"Very well, dear, but be careful coming home, and don't smash into anything or get hurt; also be a good child, and don't eat too much," and she laughed.

"Oh, thanks, Mother, I knew you'd be a good sport, and Archie said so, too."

The phone clicked, and Alice turned to look at herself in the mirror.

"I am a fraud," she said to her reflection. "They call me a sport when inside I'm still old-fashioned, and believe these children should have a chaperon. I wonder what Archie's mother will think of it. I'll go and ask her."

Before she had a chance to follow out her thought, Archie's mother and father stepped out of their little motor-boat and walked up to the house.

"Oh," groaned Alice, "they don't approve, and they've both come to tell me about it."

"I hear my grown-up son is lunching with your daughter," laughed Mrs. Lang.

"Yes, do you think it was terrible of me to let her?" Alice inquired. "They seemed to want to so much, and they are both such nice children."

"No, we are delighted." Mr. Lang chuckled just like Jane. "Archie has never had any use for girls except Judy, who is more of a boy than most boys, and we're happy to have him play the gallant."

"I do hope the lad has money with him," laughed his mother, "and I hope, too, that he doesn't forget little Judy."

"I'll drop a hint to Debby and I won't let her monopolize him," promised Alice. "We have some nice boys coming in a few days for the Fourth of July."

"It was about the Fourth of July that we came over. We want your help this year. We must have a record party with so many young people on the lake," said Mr. Lang. "There's a motor-boat on the next lake that wants to challenge our boat, and they are willing to send their boat here, which fact will bring a crowd, so we must provide something in the way of sports."

"We're giving a dance for Archie and Jane; just a children's party, so all your girls must come, and your guests also," Mrs. Lang explained.

"Let's have swimming contests, obstacle races, potato races, and all kinds of games," suggested Alice; "but let me call the girls in

so we can talk it over. The twins are wonderful at archery, and my girls are great ball-players."

Plans held them until lunch-time, and Alice was beginning to fear that Mr. Westlake was not coming home for that meal when a car drove up to the door and who should get out but Jim Andrews with Mr. Westlake, while a boy of about fourteen stayed in the car.

"I got the Twins' note," he said in greeting, "and I've been all this time discovering who you were. I never dreamed that it could be lucky enough to be you, but still in my heart I felt certain that note was from the Twins."

"Why, Jim, how heavenly this is!" exclaimed Janet. "We were going to write you to come up to camp for the Fourth, and here you are!"

Introductions were made and Mr. Westlake explained how he had wandered rather farther from home than he expected, and how Jim in his car had picked him up.

"Were you awfully cross about the window?" teased Phyllis.

"No, funny thing was we'd been talking about opening that window, but Buddy didn't think his father would like it open, and as it was his father's cabin we hesitated. Thanks to you, it's still open."

"Where is Buddy, as you call him? Didn't I see him in the car with you?"

Jim looked out toward the lake to discover a boatload of girls and boys coming in; Buddy Newcomb was there to catch the rope and help them ashore.

"I'm here to make an arrest," he announced as they scrambled on to the deck.

Judy looked at him and grinned.

"Window breaking?" she guessed.

"Nothing else but," said Buddy.

"Let's arbitrate," suggested Judy.

Buddy laughed. "Suggest food and I'll forgive you."

Judy took in the crowd on the piazza and grinned again.

"Straight for the back door, and we'll raid the ice-box. We don't want to have lunch with all those older people."

"Good idea," commended Jane.

"I'm hungry as a bear," laughed Charlie Mettam.

"What's your name, kid?" demanded Frank.

"Aw, they call me Buddy," replied Buddy in confusion.

"Good enough name," said Tony.

"I thought you were talking about food, and I'm starved," remarked Dodo.

"My Aunt Jane's Poll Parrot, so am I!" replied Di.

"Let's go," said Judy.

CHAPTER XV

FLOWERS

WE must have flowers in Sally's and Taffy's room," said Phyllis on the morning of their arrival, "and it's too hot to pick them."

"Yours to command," laughed Buddy, who was at the camp from morning till night. "What kind of flowers do you want? Just name them."

"Oh, Buddy, you're a darling!" exclaimed Phyllis. "Get me just loads of buttercups and daisies."

"Come on, Charlie, the lady wishes flowers, just loads of them, and you've been lazy long enough. Be up and doing like me."

They were all sitting under the giant pine trees, for Camp Happy-Go-Lucky boasted some timber that had never been destroyed by

fire. Most of the girls were sewing numbers on the backs of their bathing suits and the boys were idly watching them. There was to be a race on the Fourth, and all the boys looked to Judy to win for the lake; although it was reported that a girl who was good enough to be almost a professional was coming over from Lake St. Claire, and expected to return with all the cups.

"Tell me some more about this Taffy, as you call her," said Archie. "Debby does nothing but rave about her, and I can't see how she can be any prettier than—" and he stopped in confusion.

"Than the Twins," said Debby, coming to his rescue.

"Arch meant you, Debby," said Judy, slowly. "He told me he thought you were the——"

"Judy, if you say one word more, I'll duck you in the lake," Archie cried angrily.

Judy looked at him and decided to keep still.

"How about my flowers?" asked Phyllis, to change the subject.

Buddy jumped to his feet, and Charlie followed.

"Never picked flowers for a girl in my life," he grumbled, "but I suppose this is a good time to begin."

They went off, arm in arm, to the back of the house and were gone for the rest of the morning.

"There are the beds to make for the crowd," reminded Janet, "and if we don't hurry up Mrs. Handson will make them for us."

"Then why hurry?" laughed Judy.

"Lazy!" replied Janet, as she took the last stitch in her suit and put the needle back in the basket at her elbow.

"Let's make a race of it," suggested Helen. "Two girls to a bed, and a fair start from the linen closet."

"Good idea, Helen," said Lorry. "Wait till I finish this off so I can make one with you, and I bet we beat the lot."

"Come on, Dodo," said Judy, "that's a challenge," and she jumped up.

"Jane, do you hear that?" asked Di. "If you could see Dodo making a bed, you'd know how easy it will be for us."

The Twins went together, and Debby was left with Archie and the two Mettam boys. Archie looked at them, and they decided they had an engagement on the lake to polish the motor-boat. Archie looked at Debby and grinned.

"Why did you do that?" asked Debby, shyly.

Archie blushed. "I hate a crowd," he said. "Debby, come out to the 'Loon' and let me give you your first lesson in flying."

So much for a few added years! Judy had tried to make Archie teach her how to fly the "Loon" for two years without success.

In the main cabin Alice was approving of the race and handing out sheets to the racers. They were off, and much to everyone's surprise, Judy and Dodo won.

The morning wore on and the girls busied themselves about the cabins so that everything should be in readiness for the coming guests.

At noon they all went in swimming except Buddy and Charlie, who had not yet returned. Judy did some high diving that seemed perfect to her watchers, and Janet won a race against Dodo and Di.

After they were dressed and Helen and Alice were busy helping Mrs. Handson in the kitchen, while the Twins were setting the table on the wide piazza, Buddy and Charlie came back. They had been gone over two hours, but it looked as though they had been picking flowers for a day and a half. They had two baskets heaped high with all sorts of wild blooms, red, blue and the pale gold of the buttercup and the milky whiteness of the daisy—corn-flowers and paint brushes—they had gathered them all with spears of wild grasses. It was a riot of color, and the girls were delighted.

“We’ll take out just enough for Sally’s and

Taffy's room and send the rest over to Mrs. Lang to decorate with for the dance," Janet decided.

Mrs. Lang was most appreciative, but she insisted that the entire party come over and help her arrange them. The boys, fired by so much enthusiasm, went off, this time taking Tony and Frank with them, and returned later in the afternoon when everybody had decided that there was not room in the camp for another flower, with baskets and baskets filled with daisies.

"What under the sun shall we do with them?" asked Mrs. Lang.

"I know," said Dodo. "We'll make a daisy chain and drape it over the porch."

They set to work at once and at four o'clock Mrs. Lang brought out pitchers of lemonade and plates of fresh-baked cakes.

"You'd better spend the night with us, Buddy," said Alice. "You must be tired out."

"Jumping Lena!" exclaimed Buddy. "I forgot I had a home, and Doc won't know

where I am. Anyway, I've got to help him cook all the fish he caught today, and besides if I left him alone tonight the bears might catch him."

He grinned delightfully, said goodbye, and started off as though he were as fresh as the daisies he had been picking.

The Twins and Helen were elected to go and meet the train and bring as many home in the big farm wagon as they could pile in. The Mettams' motor-boat and the Lang's station Ford were to go, too.

It was a very warm day, with a hint of thunder in the air, while lightning played around the mountains, and invited glances into the unknown with every flash.

The train pulled into the forlorn little station, and it looked dusty and hot. Some of the windows were open, and men with handkerchiefs in their collars leaned out to get a breath of air.

Peter and English were the first to jump off the train. They turned to help Sally and

Taffy and Nat off next, and they in turn were followed by Grant Weeks, Jimmy Crosby and Chuck. Last of all came Ivan, with Deedee and Little Thing.

No one heard exactly what anyone else was trying to say, there being such confusion of greetings, but Helen heard Ivan's "How good to see you, how very good!" and she smiled a happy smile.

"My Aunt Jane's Poll Parrot," it was Sally, of course, "what a mob there is of us!"

"Who wants to ride with whom?" demanded Phyllis.

"Please, may I drive the beautiful Taffy home?" asked Archie, and Chuck turned to him quickly.

"Not without me, you can't." He laughed, and Archie joined him.

"Come, by all means; I want only to ride with her for the sake of comparison. They told me she was prettier than Debby and I was blessed if I could see how such a thing could be, that's all."

Archie held the door open to the front seat, and Daphne and Chuck got in.

Sally and Grant Weeks jumped in the back.

Nat and Jimmy Crosby climbed into the farm-wagon, Peter and English with the Twins following suit, as well as the children. This left Ivan and Helen to go by the boat, which was waiting half a mile up the road at the landing.

"Miss Helen," said Ivan, "this is as I would wish it."

"It is delightful, isn't it? I wish I might have brought Sonya to meet you, but she was so sleepy she fell asleep over her dessert. She has gained pounds, and you'll never know her."

Helen spoke nervously. Now that Ivan was here, would he understand these people, and would they be nice to him, she wondered. Suddenly, Ivan stood still in the middle of the road. He put his hand on Helen's arm timidly.

"Miss Helen, I love you," he said. "I have lost everything—my estates, my money, all but Sonya—but I have found you. This is enough to compensate if you will only have me."

Helen looked at him. There were tears in her eyes as she answered.

"I love you, too, Ivan, and I shall do everything to make you and Sonya happy, and—and—do stop calling me 'Miss Helen.'"

Ivan would have caught her in his arms and kissed her, but just then a shout came from the lake and Charlie Mettam and Judy walked down the road to meet them.

"You're Russian, aren't you?" Judy inquired after she had heard Ivan's unpronounceable last name.

Ivan nodded, smiling.

"Do you believe in the Soviet form of government?" asked Charlie. "'Cause if you do, don't tell my father, he's very much against them."

Ivan frowned, and then he smiled.

“I think,” he said, “that your father and I will get along beautifully. I was sent from my country by the Soviet.”

Charlie sighed a sigh of relief.

CHAPTER XVI

COUPLES

HELEN could not keep the news from the Twins. One look at her usually placid face, which was now radiant with smiles, and the secret was out.

"Helen, let's tell everybody," Phyllis insisted. "It's too nice to keep to ourselves."

"Oh, Phyllis, I couldn't," begged Helen. "I'd die of embarrassment."

The one who took it most calmly was Sonya. When Ivan told her she was to have Helen for a new sister, Sonya replied:

"Oh, but she's been my sister for just ages; still it will be nice living in the same house."

Hester was delighted, and hugged Ivan every time she saw him, which led to explanations.

"Hester, why are you always making such

a fuss over Ivan? I'm jealous," declared Peter, laughing as he pulled the youngster down to his knee.

"Because he's going to be my really-truly brother," Hester explained at the top of her voice.

Helen blushed, and Ivan looked hard at the lake.

Congratulations were in order, and they came fast and furiously, until Hester beamed. She was delighted at having let the cat out of the bag.

The children were sent off to bed, and the rest paired off in couples. Dodo and Di and Judy went down to the lake to talk about the next day, while Jimmy claimed Lorry, and found the canoe. The Twins and Peter and English went for a ride in the motor-boat, while Ivan sat with Helen on the porch of the children's cabin.

Chuck claimed Daphne for a walk, while Grant and Sally sat out under the pines. Debby was across the lake at the Langs'.

Only Nat was without a companion, and she was feeling rather forlorn. Alice had promised to come back after helping her husband mount some of his precious butterflies; but Alice could hardly take the place of a boy. Nat turned her thoughts back to the ranch, and the good times she had had there.

"Those boys would have never let me feel out of it the way I do now," she said to herself. "Well, you can't be popular all of the time, and they won't always go out in couples. The Twins would have a fit if they knew I was alone."

She went over to the bookcase to select a book when she happened to glance at the door. Jim Andrews was standing there and he was smiling.

"I'm lonely, too. Suppose we go out and find a boat," he said.

"Why, you're the man that saved the girl on the train, aren't you?" Nat asked, surprised. "I didn't know you were staying here."

"I'm not—that is, I manage to spend most of my days here; but nights I sleep in a cabin at the other end of the lake."

"What fun! I'm glad you're here, I was awfully lonely," said Nat.

"So I heard," teased Jim in his delightful Southern drawl.

"Let's do something," she suggested.

"Let's go over and talk to Mrs. Lang about tomorrow," Jim suggested, wondering now that he had this child on his hands what he could do with her.

"I don't think that sounds very exciting," protested Nat. "Why don't we go for a boat ride? There must be a canoe around here somewhere."

"Not a sign of one, I've looked."

"Well, then, how do we get to the Langs'? They live somewhere across the lake, don't they?"

"In my disreputable Ford; it's waiting at the door for you, all ready to step into," Jim explained gravely. "And I've really got to

see Mrs. Lang about the prizes, so come along," he added.

"Tell me," said Nat, when they were bumping off down the road, "what became of the girl on the train? Did she get well?"

"Why, she was well the last time you and Sally called at the hospital, wasn't she?" Jim asked, evasively.

"Oh, I mean after she got home to her beloved mountains," Nat explained. "I thought the day I last saw her she looked awfully weak."

"I guess she's all right," fibbed Jim.

Nat turned to look at him. "Jim Andrews, you know she isn't, you've heard something."

Jim nodded soberly. "She died," he said slowly. "The trip home was too much for her. I got a letter from her brother. It was dictated to the postmaster—reckon he couldn't write—and it said they gave her a big funeral, and that was all they could do."

"Oh, Jim, I'm so sorry." Tears were slipping down Nat's cheeks, and she felt a lump

in her throat. "They loved her so," she added.

"Yes, it was a great pity," Jim's voice had softened too, "but don't tell the rest until the house-party is over. They all take it for granted that she got well. Let's keep it our secret," he added. "It will be nice having even a sad secret with you all."

"Yes, it would spoil the house-party to tell about it, so don't let's; but isn't there something we could do for them? I remember she said she had hosts of brothers and sisters."

"No, they are as proud as Lucifer, and won't take a cent," Jim told her; and then seeing the sorrowful expression on her face, he said: "Now, cheer up, childie, you mustn't let this cast a shadow on your good time."

His voice was gentle, and his unspoken sympathy was the last straw. Nat put her head on his shoulder and howled.

"Oh, Jim, why are there so many wretched people in the world?" she sobbed. "It makes it wicked to be happy, almost."

"Nonsense!" declared Jim. "We are put

in the world to be happy, not selfishly happy, you understand, but happy by making others happy. If you do that just wherever you happen to be, and go on being as happy as you possibly can yourself, as an example, why, you are doing your best to cheer up a sorry world. But if you go around with a long face, and worry about other people's misfortunes when you can't help them, then you are doing more harm than good, and you ought to be spanked. Be happy! That's what the old world needs," and Jim stopped his lecture to laugh.

"Oh," said Nat, "you talk to me as though I were about twelve years old, but I sort of like it."

"Well, you're not much older, are you?" asked Jim, glancing down at her short skirts and her shingled hair.

"I'm sixteen," Nat replied promptly, and she tossed her head.

"I didn't know it," Jim said contritely. "Have I been talking a lot of rubbish?"

"You have," said Nat, "but I kinda liked it."

They halted before the Langs' camp and found Archie and Debby on the piazza. They were deep in the subject of aeronautics and did not appear too pleased at being interrupted, so Nat and Jim went on into the house to talk to Mrs. Lang.

Out on the lake Lorry was trying to remember she was a Spartan, and Jimmy Crosby was making love to her.

"Lorry, I tell you there isn't any girl in the world as beautiful as you are. Why, they are like the moon in 'Romeo and Juliet', 'pale and sick with grief that thou, her maid, art far more fair than she.' "

"Oh, Jimmy, I do like you," said Lorry, desperately, "but you are so fearfully silly. Do stop quoting poetry, and paddle this canoe home. Mother will think I am lost."

Jimmy rowed savagely for a few minutes.

"Sorry I annoyed you," he said, huffily. "I

had something to tell you, but now I don't suppose you are interested."

"Oh, Jimmy, don't sulk," Lorry begged. "Tell me."

"Oh, it's nothing, only I had a picture accepted for the Spring Academy, and it won a landscape prize."

Try as hard as he would, he could not keep the pride out of his voice.

"Jimmy," said Lorry, and her voice was hurt, "why didn't you write, or send a telegram, or something?" she demanded.

"Wanted to tell you myself. Besides, it means going abroad for a year, and that's not so good," he broke off, and laughed unhappily. "If you'd have told me when I started to study Art a few years ago that I'd be miserable at the thought of a year in Italy, I'd have laughed at you."

"Well, you might have," said Lorry. "It's a wonderful chance, Jimmy, and I don't see why you are miserable. Tell me."

Jimmy brought the nose of the canoe up

alongside of the deck and steadied it for Lorry to get out.

"Then—I—won't—tell—you," he said very slowly, and Lorry tried to look more Spartan than ever as she answered:

"Oh, very well."

CHAPTER XVII

FOURTH OF JULY

OH say, oh say, oh say! Fourth of July is a blazing hot day!" Di and Dodo sang their rhymed couplet at the door of the Twins' cabin, and rapped loudly for admittance.

It was only seven o'clock, but the firecrackers were already popping, and sleep was something to be thought of with vain regret.

"Come in, you wild Indians!" called Janet. "Can't you bring us any better news than that?"

Dodo and Di bounced in.

"Did you hear the giant torpedo we set off, or rather stepped on outside your door?" Dodo demanded.

"I wish we could have real big firecrackers

like you must have had when you were our age," complained Di.

Janet and Phyllis looked at each other, and burst out laughing.

"Oh, age, age, what a terrible thing it is!" sighed Phyllis with mock solemnity. "Don't you infants realize that there were no more firecrackers when we were young than there are now? The Fourth of Julys you are thinking about were before our time," she went on.

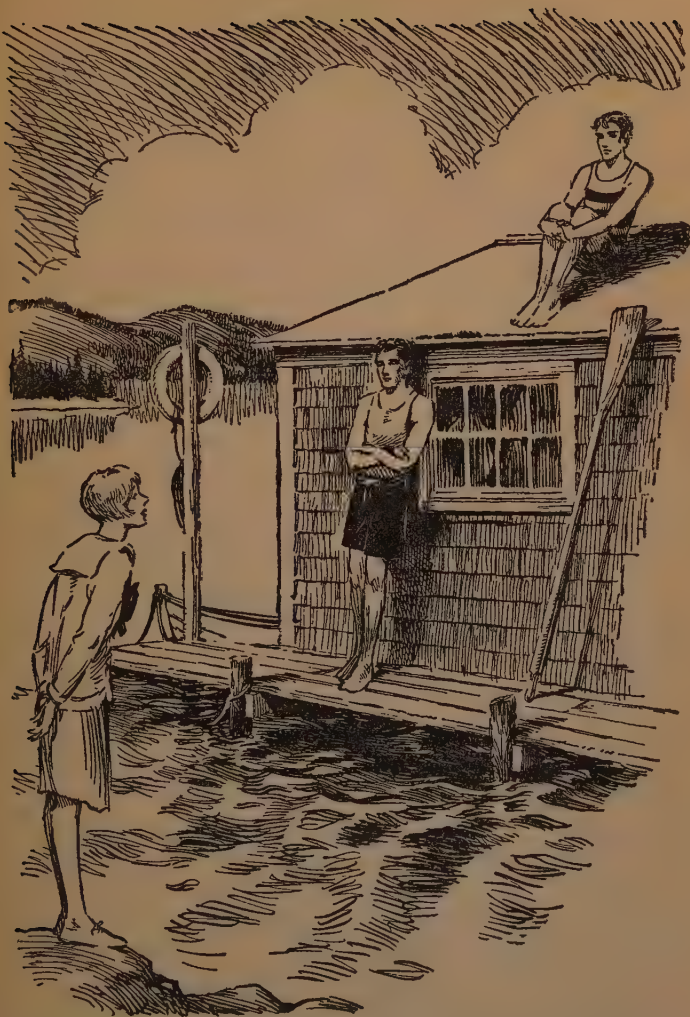
"Not before mine," laughed Janet. "I can just remember setting off a whopper near Harry Waters, and scaring him into fits."

"Grandmother never let you have giant firecrackers, Janet Page," protested Phyllis. "Auntie Mogs never let me."

"No, I bought this one from the kind grocery man," Janet admitted, "but who cares now? What's the first thing on the program, Imps?"

"A swim, the boys are waiting for you—we've had ours ages ago," Di told them.

"We're for breakfast!" exclaimed Dodo,



"English dear, do you know that once upon a time my ancestors gave yours a terrible beating on this very day?"

"and Judy asked Buddy and Charlie Mettam to stay, and she teased Mrs. Handson into making pancakes."

"Guess we'd better be up and doing," sighed Phyllis. "I could enjoy forty winks more, but if the younger generation are going to invite the countryside for meals there will be plenty to do."

"Not in the kitchen," announced Di. "Mrs. Handson said she didn't want to see a sight of you or Mother or Helen today. She has a niece there working with her, and they are both singing patriotic songs."

"May I go down and tease English about being an Englisher and getting licked?" asked Di.

"If you want to be so rude," replied Phyllis, laughing, and Di was off, followed by Dodo.

They found English in a bathing-suit, sitting on the roof of the boat-house. He and Peter were waiting for the Twins.

"English dear, do you know that once upon

a time my ancestors gave yours a terrible beating on this very day?" Di demanded, bent on teasing.

"Hush," said English, putting his fingers to his lips, "you mustn't talk about family squabbles. After all, it was a nice fight and we all behaved like gentlemen, so that's that," he ended, laughing.

A voice seldom heard came up out of the water and the girls stared at their father.

"Di, what you say has no foundation whatever," he said, and he smiled unexpectedly. "Your ancestors were still in the old country when the war was going on. In fact," he added, with a wink at English, "I wouldn't be a bit surprised if some of them came over and fought with the English, so you'd best be careful what you say about severe beatings."

"Oh," gasped Di, "how perfectly terrible, and here I've been teasing English, and all the time—oh, Father, are you sure?"

"Quite positive, daughter," and with a

jerky little nod Mr. Westlake swam away as if he had talked quite enough for one day.

"I'm afraid, Di, that we are allies," English laughed.

"Oh, dear," sighed Di.

"Never mind, English," Dodo said, comfortingly, "I'm proud to be your partner, even in a licking. I always did love English history and now I know the reason why."

Peter dived into the water, and coming up caught hold of Di's foot.

"One word more about any war, Miss, and I'll pull you into the water, Fourth of July clothes, and everything."

The Twins joined them at this point, and for a few minutes they swam about. The water was very cold, and as they knew they would be in again later in the day, they took only a short dip, and then hurried to dress for breakfast.

At ten o'clock the truck that brought the contesting motor-boat arrived, and everybody crowded around to see it unloaded.

At twelve the race was called. The three Mettam boys in bathing suits got under way at the drop of the flag and held the lead for the three times around the lake. That was the first victory.

Swimming came next. There was a girl's race, which Judy easily won, to no one's surprise, for she had a breast-stroke that seemed to push the water away from her, and sent her spinning over the surface.

The men's race followed, and everyone at Happy-Go-Lucky Camp was surprised to see Judy in a heated argument with Mr. Westlake. Alice, who was on the roof of the boat-house, heard her husband saying:

"But, my dear young lady, I couldn't possibly do such a thing."

And Judy replied: "But you must, you know. I did my bit, now it's time for you to do yours. I know you're a good sport and its for the glory of old Happy-Go-Lucky."

Alice did not know what it was that Judy was asking Mr. Westlake to do, but she wisely

refrained from interfering, and hoped that she would succeed.

At last Mr. Westlake seemed to give in and his daughters gasped with surprise as he took his place on the dock with the other men and boys. He had no number on his back, so Judy tore off hers, which happened to be "13," and pinned it on his suit.

The flag dropped, and they were off. Bare arms gleamed in the sunshine and the spray danced as they followed the course across the lake and back. Judy stood on the dock and waved her arms in a frenzy of excitement. On came the swimmers, two ahead of the rest, and those watching saw that they were Archie Lang and Mr. Westlake.

The judges said that it was a perfect tie and there was nothing for it but another race. Mr. Westlake smiled and nodded, but Archie called a halt.

"'Twouldn't be fair, Father," he said to Mr. Lang, who was one of the judges. "I'm in practice, but Mr. Westlake is winded and

it's not fair to expect him to do it all over again. We can share the cup and the honors, can't we, sir?"

No one objected to this arrangement, and Mr. Westlake went over and sat down beside his wife.

"Who is that particularly agreeable youth with whom I am to share my cup?" he asked with a quiet smile.

"Why, dear, he is one of your daughter's most attentive admirers," said Alice.

"Ah," said Mr. Westlake, "that makes it easier to comprehend," and those who saw him smile understood why it was that Alice had married him.

Luncheon was served under the pines, and everybody did full justice to it.

The boys were not looking forward to the next event of the day with much eagerness. They were to play the girls in a game of baseball, and they would have much preferred to play another boys' team; but they had to be polite, and gentle, too, they supposed, al-

though they had no intention of letting the girls beat them.

They went to bat first and the girls were scattered over the field, some of them even picking daisies.

Dodo was in the pitcher's box and Di was catching. Judy was on first base and Jane on second; Nat was on third, with Helen as short-stop. Lorry and Debby were playing right and left field. Janet was calling the balls and strikes, and Phyllis covered the bases as umpire when the men were at bat. Jim Andrews and Mr. Lang acted as umpires for the boys.

Frank Mettam was the first man at bat, and he looked as bored as he felt. Girls were all right in their places, but he resented them on the base-ball diamond. They should be sitting on the side lines in fluffy clothes calling encouragement.

He lifted his bat, and Janet called in stentorian tones:

"Play ball!"

Dodo sent a swift one past the astonished Frank, and Janet called: "Strike one."

Frank smiled grimly at the laughter and cheers that followed, and tightened his belt. That would not happen again, smart as the young lady was. He wasn't afraid of a swift ball. He stood to take it, and Dodo sent a mean trickling curve over the plate. Frank lammed at it and missed.

"Strike two," said Janet, sweetly, and Tony called out:

"Oh, Frank, for the love of Pete, wake up."

He hit the next one and smiled in triumph, but his victory was short lived. Helen caught the ball and threw it to Jane, who put Frank out on second base.

"Why didn't you stay on first?" Tony inquired.

Of course, the game did not go on like that, for as soon as the boys realized that it was real base-ball they would have to play, they settled down, and the girls lost steadily. At the end of the first half of the ninth inning

the score was seven to four. Debby was at bat and Archie was pitching, the bases were full and there were two out.

By this time the boys had decided that the game was theirs, and Archie decided to give Debby, this most wonderful girl in the world, a nice easy ball. It might bring in a run, but that would not hurt anybody, so he threw a slow one over the plate.

Debby saw it coming and she wanted to show her appreciation for it, so she swung mightily and the ball soared out over the field towards Charlie, who was playing left field and who was thinking that no more balls would come his way, as Judy had batted for the last time. It was too late when he saw the ball. It landed ten feet away from him and he tripped while scrambling to get it.

All four runs came in and the boys faced defeat. They were more amazed than angry, and Archie learned the lesson that the race is never won till the goal is reached.

It was a hilarious party that night at the

Langs' and at midnight everybody was tired but happy.

"I'm a chump," sighed Archie, as he remembered the last pitched ball.

"I really wanted the boys to win," said Debby to herself, but she did not dare tell Lorry.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE MIKADO

WEEKS passed and still the fun at Happy-Go-Lucky Camp kept up at a riotous rate.

By the first of August Ann, Prue and Gladys arrived, and the Mettams had three boys to visit them. Alice began to wonder what to do with her guests when Phyllis reminded her of Sally's idea for a play. They immediately went to Sally to find out what kind of a play she had in mind, and learned she was thinking of "*The Mikado*" by Gilbert and Sullivan, that comic opera story of Japan, where the son of the Emperor leaves home as a wandering minstrel to escape the arranged marriage with Catishaw, to find himself in love at first sight with the beautiful Yum Yum, only to discover that she is be-

trothed to Koko, who is having difficulties with his ministers because there has not been an execution for a long time.

As Koko was made High Executioner to save his own neck, and was next on the list to die, the question arose: How could he cut another's head until he had cut his own off? Koko explains that a man can't cut his own head off, to which Pooh Bah replies gravely: "A man might try."

They hit upon the happy idea of a substitute, and Nanki Pooh, the Emperor's son, offers himself, if Koko will give him Yum Yum as a bride. Koko consents and they are married, only to discover that the law is that when a man marries, and is beheaded, his wife must die too.

So they decide to pretend that the execution has taken place, and the two newly-weds go off on their honeymoon. The Emperor and Catishaw arrive and learn they are too late; but Koko and Pooh Bah and Pitti Sing, one of the three little maids of whom Yum

Yum and Peep Bo are the other two, tell him in graphic language how "he shivered and shook as he gave the sigh for the stroke that he didn't deserve." The Emperor is delighted until he finds that the victim is his own son, then he promptly decides to have the Executioner boiled in oil. Nanki Pooh and Yum Yum return in the nick of time and Koko marries Catishaw.

Alice read the play to the assembled company one rainy morning, and they all loved it. Next came the difficulty in casting it.

Daphne had a voice, and was chosen for Yum Yum while Phyllis, who could sing a little, was made Pitti Sing; and to complete the trio, Janet was suggested as Peep Bo, but she refused, and they cast Debby in her place. Sally chose Catishaw and promised to look as ugly as possible. The rest of the girls were happy to have parts in the chorus.

Chuck was chosen for Nanki Pooh, and Grant Weeks was Koko, but he had stage-fright at the first rehearsal, and English was

coaxed to take his part. Archie, with a sofa cushion to make him look pompous, was cast for Pooh Bah.

Helen, who could play the piano, was in great demand for rehearsals.

Alice and Janet were stage managers and found their work cut out for them, getting the actors in from the lake for practice.

When this chapter opens Daphne was learning to patter down the steps for her entrance between Phyllis and Debby, and the rest were laughing at her.

"You walk as though you were going to stumble at every step," complained Janet. "Can't you all imagine that your feet were bound in early infancy, and walk accordingly?"

"Good idea, Jan," Phyllis called from the stage. "Watch me, Taffy," and she minced daintily down the three steps at the back.

Daphne caught on at once, and they began their song:

“Three little maids from school are we,
Filled to the brim with girlish glee,
Three little maids from school;”

Daphne’s voice rose clear and sweet:

“One little maid is the bright Yum Yum,”

Phyllis almost spoke her line:

“Two little maids in attendance come,”

Then Debby, with her low melodious voice:

“Three little maids is the total sum,”

Then all together:

“Three little maids from school.”

They knew their lines, and got through with it very well.

“Where is English?” Alice demanded, and Phyllis had to admit that he was out fishing with Jim Andrews.

“The wretch!” said Alice. “Go and get him, Buddy; Nat, you go with him to amuse Jim. Tell English he simply must come.”

Buddy and Nat had a hunt for the boys, but in the motor-boat they discovered them tucked away in a corner of a stream that fed the lake.

"Culprits!" said Nat. "They are waiting for you at camp to rehearse"

English made up for lost time when he returned to camp. He borrowed a kimona from Phyllis, and at the close of the first chorus, when nobody expected him, he made his appearance singing:

"Taken from a country gaol
By a set of curious chances."

"English, when did you learn that?" demanded Phyllis, and English grinned.

She knew he had not studied his lines and she was expecting a dismal failure, but instead he had shown them a delightful interpretation of the rôle.

"You've been in this play before," accused Prue. "Tell us about it."

"Oh, we were always giving private theatricals, and this was a favorite," English told them. "My little sister played Yum Yum," he added, with a far-away look in his eyes.

Janet and Phyllis both knew that English's sister had died years before, and they realized it must hurt him to remember; but he went through with it like the sportsman he was, and only the Twins guessed at his sad memories.

They rehearsed only the first act; and then, glad to be released from even so pleasant a task, they all hurried into their bathing suits and into the lake.

Debby and Archie were the first out, and they hurried to dress so that they could go up in their beloved plane. They were too hurried to bother about looking for gasoline. They soared over the tops of the trees, investigated a tiny pink cloud, when Archie looked at his indicator and realized too late that they were without gas. For an instant he knew black despair for Debby, but then his brain cleared, and he saw a sheet of water away to the right. The plane dropped, but he guided it and they hit the water with a sudden thud, skimmed along, and smashed into the shore

while a tree crashed into them. They were both stunned and Archie had a deep cut over one eye. Debby regained consciousness first and saw him. He was pinned down and could not move.

"Archie," she whispered, and Archie opened one eye.

Consciousness returned to him slowly, and with it came the need of action.

"Steady there, I can get out, I think," he said at last and squirmed out of the wreck; then he pulled Debby after him.

"Not hurt, are you?" he asked in a matter-of-fact voice.

Lorry was not the only one of the West-lakes who had a touch of the Spartan in them. Debby showed her training by the steadiness of her voice.

"Not hurt a bit, thanks. How about your eye?"

"Fast closing. Guess we better start out for home. Luckily, I know the way."

Debby was not at all sure that she could

walk, but she found her feet obeying her, and they trudged along for a mile in silence. Suddenly Archie laughed—it was a nervous laugh and showed his state of mind.

“Deb, I suppose you could kill me,” he said. “Well, I could kill myself. I did the unpardonable thing,—forgot to look in the tank. Will you ever get over it, do you think?”

Debby wanted to cry, but she said nothing, and the tears stayed in her throat.

“You see, it’s this way,” Archie went on desperately, “I knew I liked you better than any girl I ever knew, but I suppose I was too much of a kid to know about love. Anyway, I know about it now. It came all of a sudden up there, and well, you see, it makes it pretty bad if you are going to hate me for the rest of my life.”

“Hate you!” Debby exclaimed. “Why, Archie, I’ve known I loved you for ages, and this only makes me adore you more.”

“Oh,” said Archie, and his knees suddenly

gave out from under him, "then suppose I kiss you."

"Just once," replied Debby, "and then not for ages—that is, until we're old enough to be engaged."

Archie took the kiss eagerly.

"Deb, don't you believe in early marriages?" he asked.

"Yes, but our families won't, and there's four years of college for you."

"But you'll wait."

"Yes, I'll wait," promised Debby.

At home they made so little of their accident that no one thought much of it, and Mrs. Lang bound up Archie's head with a song in her heart that so slight an accident would so damage the machine that there would be no more flying for many a long day.

At supper that night Peter said teasingly:

"I suppose Debby has made you promise never to fly again, Arch?"

Archie cast one horrified glance at Debby, who replied stoutly:

“Don’t be silly, Peter. Of course, Archie’s going to fly again. I’ll never be happy until he flies to Paris and back and”—she added with a little smile just for Archie—“and takes me with him.”

CHAPTER XIX

THE PLAY—CONCLUSION

THE day of the play started with a number of minor catastrophes. The native who had promised Mr. Handson to help him put up the long row of planks that were to serve as seats did not put in an appearance; the Langs' car was out of order; Little Thing had a toothache; and one of Juno's pups was lost.

"It's the pup I'm most worried about," said Judy. "Jan, do stop this play business, and help me find him. It's the little one that I named Runty."

Janet promised to look for the dog, and thereby had to neglect several other important things.

Ivan came to the rescue, helping Handson with the seats and final fixing of the stage,

which took up one side of the big cabin. Because the whole room was surrounded by a broad piazza the exits were via French doors into the open air, and the dressing rooms were the cabins nearest. This made it rather inconvenient, but it was the best that could be arranged with the material at hand.

At one o'clock the puppy had not been found, and there was a general gloom over everything and everybody. The household was eating a sketchy luncheon of sandwiches on the shore of the lake when an imposing looking car drove up to the door of the main cabin and a liveried chauffeur got out and opened the door.

"My Aunt Jane's Poll Parrot, who is this?" demanded Alice, and she jumped up, and smoothed her wrinkled smock.

A very severely dressed woman got out and looked about her through a pair of lorgnettes.

"Is this Happy-Go-Lucky Camp?" she asked in a high, affected voice. "Such a re-

freshing name for a camp, I think," she added, condescendingly.

Alice looked at her and smiled. She knew plenty of people like her in the days when she had acted as her aunt's companion.

"Have you lost your way?" she asked politely.

"No, indeed. I come as an entire delegation from John Brown's to make inquiries about this marvelous play you are giving to-night. Mayn't I meet some of the characters; and where may I purchase tickets? We are all coming, all the hotel in fact. The aim is so worthy, isn't it?"

Alice knew she had better interrupt her, for there was apparently no stopping the woman.

"We think so," she said briskly. "I can let you have tickets for twenty people."

"But that won't be half enough," replied the woman, with a very broad 'a' in the 'half.' "We want at least fifty—if you are going to put on any kind of an entertainment."

"We think we are," said Alice, still being very brisk and businesslike. "But I can let you have only twenty tickets," she added, and there was finality in her tone.

"How distressing! Well, I suppose I must be content with that. Let me know if any more are turned in, won't you?" and with a weary smile she got back in her car, and Alice watched her out of sight, and then suddenly realized that she had not given her the tickets.

"Well, perhaps she won't come," she said, hopefully, as she returned to the girls.

"But, Alice, she must come," said Peter, "and all fifty of her friends. We need the money and we can seat them by asking the St. Claire crew to come to the dress rehearsal this afternoon, and only charging them half price. They have a dance tonight, anyway, and I'm sure they wouldn't mind."

"Righto, Peter, that's a good suggestion," said English. "We'll send Buddy and Grant Weeks over this minute."

So the matter was taken out of Alice's

hands, and two-thirty saw the guests from the St. Claire hotel sitting uncomfortably on the hard boards. They were a jolly lot, and when the curtain did not go up on the dot of the half hour they began clapping good-naturedly.

The five musicians commenced the overture, which they bungled rather sadly, and the curtain rose on the first chorus:

“We are gentlemen of Japan
On many a screen and fan.”

The voices were untrained, but the zest with which they sang the amusing words made up for the lack of quality.

But St. Claire Lake had been invited over to a dress rehearsal, and they had no intention of being content with an ordinary performance.

“Miss Daphne, sing that over again,” said a bald-headed man in the first row, as he stood up and using a stick as a baton he made Taffy sing the Moon Song over again, and he showed her just how it should be done.

"Thanks, awfully," said Daphne, and everybody laughed.

The man was in deadly earnest, and before anybody realized what was happening they were in the middle of a real rehearsal led by a well-known theatrical manager.

"I shall stay for supper—just a sandwich—and we will go over the solos again," said Mr. Sanders, for it was he, and when the company realized who it was they were too flattered to protest against the hard work.

He was particularly hard on Daphne, and just when she thought she would weep with fatigue he called her aside and told her that he would some day make her a very great actress; so for the rest of the evening Taffy walked on air, much to Chuck's distress.

At eight-thirty the curtain went up again for the second time, only on this occasion Mr. Sanders was in the wings and everyone felt that his hand was at their back.

The two stars of the performance were

Daphne and English, although Phyllis was encored three times in her song to Catishaw.

At the last chorus:

“May all good fortune,

All good fortune

Prosper you”

a lean, bedraggled puppy slid across the stage and ended at Judy's feet. Judy leaned down and picked him up and made him wave his paw at the audience.

Hours later, when the guests had departed, after gushing and exclaiming at a great rate, the company sat down to a huge plate of sandwiches and some iced tea that would probably keep everybody awake.

“We made over two hundred dollars, not counting donations, which brings it up to three hundred and fifty,” said Alice.

“What a perfect way to end the summer!” said Janet.

“Don't talk about the end of the summer, unless you want me to weep,” said Debby, and she looked appealingly at Mrs. Lang.

The elder woman leaned over and patted her hand.

“Well, there’s one thing, dear child, the Langs and the Westlakes will never lose track of each other. Be sure of that.”

For Lorry and Jimmy the end of the summer meant separation, and their hands met in the darkness in mutual sympathy.

“We’ll all have to meet again somewhere next summer,” said Judy, voicing the thought that was uppermost in the younger crowd’s mind.

“Why, I know where we will all see each other,” exclaimed Dodo, “at Helen’s wedding!”

“You’ll ask us all, won’t you?” begged Di.

“Every single one of you,” said Helen and Ivan together.

CHAPTER XX

CONCLUSION

GOODBYE, dear old Juno, I'm going to miss you and your family, even if I have one of you with me," were Janet's last words as the Langs' car took them from the cabin to the station.

Phyllis' were: "Fare thee well, nice lake, I'll be back soon."

"Not too soon," said English. "The next adventure of the Twins will be staged on an Eastbound steamer. I've had letters from England, and we are going abroad for a summer."

The puppy, whose name was Diana, put her cold nose up through the basket, and licked the two hands that were holding each other in a tight grasp at the bare thought of this next adventure. They belonged to the Twins.

THE END

